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# COLOUR, RACE AND EMPIRE

# COLOUR, RACE AND EMPIRE

by

A. G. RUSSELL

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## FOREWORD

ABOUT TWELVE years ago a series of articles in the *Spectator* on the "Colour Bar" first aroused my interest in this department of sociology and led me to some varied and unsystematic reading and thinking on the problems it involved. This interest, concentrated not so much on the physical reasons for colour differentiation as on its practical importance in our social and economic system, led to consideration of the means by which the white race had so largely monopolized, in recent centuries, political and commercial leadership and direction, and then to the way in which these advantages had been used in the British Colonial Empire. This development will perhaps explain first of all some of the omissions which would be reprehensible in a full-length study of the subject; I have, for instance, left out the problem as it affects the United States, though that has always been in the background of my thoughts. Then again, since the greater part of the British Colonial Empire is in Africa, it is inevitable that Africa should monopolize the greater part of what I have written. Yet, while the Union of South Africa is an independent Dominion, its connection with those parts still controlled by the Colonial Office is so tightly knotted that it had to be brought into the picture. To discuss India in this relation would need not one but many separate volumes, yet India provides so many illustrations of my main thesis that it could not possibly be omitted, however inadequate and sketchy its share may be.

We use the word "crisis" nowadays so frequently that we are apt to forget its root meaning—"judgment". The present war is the greatest crisis of the past five centuries—it is the judgment passed upon the type of civilization which has evolved since the days when the mediaeval world gave way to the modern world, and more than any other conflict it has tested and shaken the bases, political, economic and spiritual, on which that world has been built. No organization can hope to escape the stresses and strains which such a struggle brings, least of all one in which a dominant race or nation is fighting for its continued existence. In such a titanic struggle it is well for us to know our own strength and our own weakness—if our weakness is the result of ignorance, we can, even at this late hour, repair it; if it is the consequence of injustice, our very salvation depends upon our righting the wrongs

we have caused. No one would claim that the whole History of the Colonial Empire was one unrelieved sombre page of cruelty and oppression, still less one unsullied by ambition and greed. Somewhere between the two lies the truth, which still has its different facets according to the view-point of the onlooker. So if this work appears defective or unappreciative, it is so purposely, in order that some consideration may be given to those aspects of the "swelling act of the imperial theme" which seem to stand in most need of amendment or correction. The parable of the mote and the beam is applicable not less to great empires than to private individuals.

I have tried to acknowledge in footnotes the debt I owe to many writers on this subject, but I am all too conscious that much of what I have written may have been due to others whose work I have read and assimilated; the daily changing scene has brought fresh information, fresh projects and fresh hopes that could not always find a place in these pages. One work, at least, must be mentioned with gratitude and admiration. *An African Survey* which Lord Hailey and his collaborators wrote for the African Research Survey under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs is an inexhaustible quarry from which the precious metal of fact can endlessly be disinterred. I have extracted from it many a nugget and still left its riches unimpaired. For the rest I hope this acknowledgement will be enough, together with my apologies for any accidental omissions.

A. G. R.

*Liverpool*, 1942.

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## CHAPTER I

# PROBLEMS OF RACE AND COLOUR

"I, Willie Wastle,  
Stand firm in my castle;  
And a' the dogs o' your town  
Will no' pull Willie Wastle down."

THE SUMMARY, popular and inaccurate division of the world's inhabitants into three or four main ethnic groups determined by the colour of their skins presents us, in a nutshell, with one of the most perplexing and baffling problems that the wit of man has ever been called upon to solve. It cannot be only an academic subject, to be debated by the pundits of anthropology, in an atmosphere far from reality, because the implications of that division and the sentiments it has produced affect the whole world, are not only themselves debated in a spirit which is far from scientific, but breed attitudes of mind which have the most potent influence for good and bad on the outlooks and on the actions of people who otherwise have never given a moment's thought to the real nature of the question. And yet, what can be of greater importance to the world of the future than the correct solution of what the white man is so often pleased to call, in a patronizing tone, "The Colour Problem"?

It is a problem for the politician who has to face the stubborn prejudice of, say, a white minority in a country predominantly inhabited by blacks; it is a problem confronting the economist who realizes the part played by a mass of black labour, serving white masters; for the sociologist who must dispassionately consider the effects on a community of miscegenation; of the missionary presenting what is mainly a white man's gospel, yet forced to admit the white man's betrayal of it. It is a problem for the hard-headed business man as well as for the sentimentalist, for the timid and the brave, for the hide-bound conservative equally with the social reformer.

And what of the ordinary white citizen of this country who appears to fall into none of these categories? He may live in a large seaport town: there he cannot fail to notice the effects of the relations between black and white; if he possesses private means, perhaps some of his wealth is drawn from the mines of South Africa, dependent for every ounce of gold they extract, or every diamond they disinter, upon the labour of native Africans; his cocoa, cane-sugar and soap have, at one stage or another, been

handled by Gold Coast negroes, or descendants of West Indies slaves, while the wealth of India, produced by hundreds of millions of men and women whose skin is darker than his own, has gone to build up the financial and economic supremacy of the British Empire. His nights may be made sleepless by grim and fantastic imaginings about the "Yellow Peril", he may feel that the whole economic fabric, as he now knows it, may tumble down in a welter of ruin brought about by the uncanny skill and patient efficiency of the inhabitants of Japan and China—in fact, the spectrum of his existence may be split into a new range of colours, almost unknown to physical science, in which black and yellow predominate.

Now, while it would be idle to deny that racial problems based upon difference of colour have existed from remote times, it is true to say that these have been vastly accentuated during the past two hundred years, following upon those great economic and industrial changes which sprang from the expansion of Europe and the ever-widening range of the white man's activities from the end of the fifteenth century onwards. Indeed, the impetus which drove the Moors from Spain was only part of that greater movement which carried Spaniards and those in their service across the waters of the Atlantic, and the triumph of Ferdinand and Isabella over a swarthier race than their own is perhaps one of the earliest of those victories which the white man has gained in modern times. The descendants of the three sons of Noah have experienced to the full the vagaries of fortune's wheel—the happy lot promised to Shem has rarely come his way; Japheth is perhaps more fortunate, but there can be no doubt that Ham has suffered more than both. "A servant of servants" has he ever been to his brethren, and even now there is no end in sight to his servitude. The expansion of Europe to lands outside that continent was accompanied by the rising tide of nationalism within; upon the ruins of the old Catholic Europe grew a number of self-conscious, quarrelsome and pride-flushed nations, whose economy was ceasing to be based wholly on land tenure, whose wealth grew by the increased interchange of goods and whose activities were suddenly presented with new fields for exploitation, where adventure and profit-making went hand in hand, and where the "chivalrous" foe of the Spanish Inquisition found an outlet for such energy as he had to spare in acting as a brutally cruel slave-driver and merchant. The tradition of war, which is probably far more deeply rooted in Europe than in any other continent, gave to the white man a technological superiority in its own sphere, which can only be compared with the superiority of his intricate machinery over the hand loom, and thus by his weapons

and his methods he at once gained over the black man an ascendancy which he has never let go, and which now he dare not, even if he would.

The enslavement of so many black-skinned human beings by whites has been perhaps the one historical fact above all others which has vitiated, maybe even beyond the prospect or hope of remedy, the relations between these two branches of humanity. It will be time enough later on to discuss more fully its effects, but it seemed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to be proof of Aristotle's statement, grievously misunderstood, that some men are by nature slaves. Worse, however, was to follow. The vast accumulations of wealth in the hands of certain classes, the discovery of new methods of production, of transport, a new utilisation of the mineral resources of the earth, brought to birth, in the fulness of the historical process, the Industrial Revolution, whose shattering effects were felt over a far wider area than any ~~many~~ political revolution ever had been. The maw of the machine devoured raw material; the owner of the machine ~~cried aloud for~~ fresh supplies to feed the iron monster—they ~~were~~ ~~supplies~~ not altogether inanimate, for it was human hands that kept the wheels turning, human hands in the factories and mines at home, and human hands that gathered the cotton and other products in far-off lands. And how better could he ensure the running of his machine than by enslaving the white workers as he enslaved the black—by getting the utmost energy from the factory hand for the smallest wage, by getting from the native the most raw material for the smallest price? He was master now, not only of the economic, but also of the political machine, and so, in a mad scramble for the regions where his raw materials mainly lay, he enslaved afresh and in their own lands those unhappy sons of Ham whose homes lay beneath the tropic sun.

Though the purely economic aspects of European overseas expansion more readily suggest themselves and seem more relevant to an industrial and commercial age like our own, it must not be forgotten that the whole background of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was strongly coloured by religion, and indeed built upon religious suppositions. The triumph over the Moors was a triumph of the Faith; the Instrument of Instructions which accompanied Spanish and Portuguese explorers strictly enjoined upon them the salvation of the heathen with whom they came into contact, and the priest was almost as conspicuous on board the galleons as was the soldier. Their expeditions were not the privateering enterprises of some adventurous freebooter, but a carefully regulated and directed State activity, of which careful account had to be given, as we can see from the meticulous



reports which passed from the Spanish provinces of the Caribbean to the Royal Cabinet at Madrid. Certainly the profits were handsome, even if in the long run they undermined the economy of Spain, but it would be wrong to dismiss as mere hypocrisy the interest which the Spaniard and the Portuguese had in the conversion to Catholicism of the natives they plundered, because the religious purpose, even more perhaps than the secular, dictated the policy which was to govern the relations between the whites and the blacks. Certainly the negro and the Carib were regarded as heathen savages, but that was rather because of their religion, manners and general way of life, than because of the colour of their skins, and if once the religious difficulty was overcome, and a certain veneer of civilized living acquired, neither Spaniard nor Portuguese felt any insurmountable objection to intermarriage. It was the difference of religion rather than of colour which was used also to justify the existence of slavery, and here again, once the native was converted, he was theoretically entitled to claim his freedom.

The Dutch settlers who came to the Cape between 1595 and 1630 had also been brought up in a religious tradition which to them was of supreme importance and to which they adhered with scrupulous fidelity, making it the hard-and-fast dividing line between themselves and the Hottentots, who soon found themselves excluded from the land and who naturally were extremely hostile; but the theory still remained that conversion and baptism obliterated the colour distinction. Even in the early days of the settlement there were a number of coloured women at the Cape, brought mainly from Bengal, and these, if Christianized, were allowed to marry the colonists, while the "slave child of mixed parentage whose father was European was officially regarded as belonging to the European community, and after instruction and baptism, entitled to his freedom".<sup>2</sup>

But this tolerance was not to last long, for the growing strategic importance of the Cape, the influx of Huguenots, though few in number, with their strong Calvinistic theories of predestination, the increase in the number of slaves from the East and the development of the frontier where security could only be gained by unending vigilance and ceaseless strife against the Hottentot, Bushman and Bantu, all tended to weld together the scattered white individuals and communities into a ruling caste, who added the fairness of their complexions to their religion as standards of admission. A man's religion might be a fake, his conversion only pretended, but he could never divest himself effectively of the

<sup>1</sup> *Race Attitudes in South Africa*, MacCrone, 1937, pp. 7 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

outward uniform in which Nature had clad him. The influence of the frontier on American psychology and political methods has often been noted—Dr. MacCrone, from whose work the above is largely drawn, has studied its effect on South Africa, and shown how the same vigorous enterprise has often degenerated into violence (though he stresses the fact that lynching is a form of mass murder from which South Africa has happily been free), and how the concept of liberty narrowed itself to become the exclusive possession of a minority, while for the majority slavery was “the only wear”.

The contact of the native African with Christianity was eventually to be in striking contrast with his experience of another great missionary religion which burst upon him from the East. The Arabs who brought Mohammedanism to Africa regarded the negro in much the same light as did the Christians, and had no hesitation in enslaving him, but they strove to convert him as well, and frequently succeeded, for Islam's theocracy was a working form of democracy, recognizing no distinction of colour within the one fold. The Koran did not forbid slavery, but it enjoined care for the slave's health, some comfort for his old age, so that he had a definite status within the household of believers. Sons whom a female <sup>1</sup> slave bore to her master were themselves free; and since this frequently happened, the general sentiment of the conquering race in time became profoundly modified—while the Arab slave hunts were of appalling cruelty by any modern standard, they appear to have left little of the hatred and smouldering resentment that slavery elsewhere has done; it has been noted that the African is ready, and even keen nowadays to serve the Arab.<sup>2</sup>

The mad scramble for the spoils of Africa which was the major political activity of the second half of the nineteenth century was the last stage in the process which gave the white races<sup>3</sup> their political and economic domination over roughly eight-ninths of the habitable globe—and when we recall that these races themselves form only one-third of the world's population, the gross inequality cannot but present itself with considerable force to the mind of any intelligent black. He sees the destinies of his native country, wherever it may be, guided by an invader, he sees the

<sup>1</sup> *African Labourer*, Orde Browne, pp. 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> On the use of the word “race”, Huxley and Haddon (*We Europeans*, Pelican Edition, p. 91) say, “The word ‘race’ as applied scientifically to human groupings has lost any sharpness of meaning . . . it is very desirable that the term ‘race’ as applied to human groups should be dropped from the vocabulary of science”. The word is used here throughout as a shorthand substitute for ethnic group or groups.

diversion of the products of his own land to aliens, he sees the economic life of a whole continent geared to the white man's organization—and he cannot but resent both these facts and the self-preserving reluctance of the dominant race to share with him the privileges thus usurped and the wealth so withheld; and he asks himself, On what does the white man base his claim and how does he bolster up the position he has gained? Does he pretend to be the agent of a superior civilization—is there something intrinsically higher in the possession of a white skin—is it axiomatic that the white races are politically more mature? Or is it simply the exercise of an overriding power, supported by a higher technique of warfare, both military and economic?

In the opening chapters of the *Politics* Aristotle sets himself to deal with the institution of slavery which was fundamental to the polity and economy of his times, but he goes not much farther than saying that some men would be slaves everywhere and some nowhere—that some slaves have the souls and others the bodies of freemen; he cannot condemn a whole race to a position of slavery by the unalterable fact of its blood and colour. Indeed, it is difficult to find in the records of Greece and Rome any evidence for divisions into race and colour—it was status, slave or free, that really counted. It was left to the nineteenth century to make this attempt; and what it really did was to rationalize the political and economic domination of the white man which already existed by endeavouring to prove that there was some innate superiority in the white race—or even more restricted than that—in the Nordic stock. The four volumes which Arthur de Gobineau gave to the world between 1853 and 1855 under the title of *Traité sur l'inégalité des races humaines* bestowed on him a sort of pre-eminence in this effort. In his work, the product of a brilliant and versatile—if not volatile—mind, he emphasized the supreme importance of maintaining the purity of the white stock; he made the most amazing claims on behalf of the white race to supremacy and asserted that “all civilizations derive from it, and without it there can be no civilization at all”. The future of civilization therefore depended on the degree to which the white race could maintain the purity of its stock, for only thus could its position in the world be secure and its influence percolate to those less happy people below it in the hierarchy of races.

Here, then, was an admirable rationalization of what was a political fact—it appeared to be the justification of the past and present superiority of the whites, or at least of a portion of them, and it offered a useful theoretical or pseudo-anthropological plea of reason for an extension of the idea not merely to races of different colour, but even to those whose nose was a different shape; it

also lent its powerful support to somewhat vague notions which man has always cherished that the great constituent races of the world each have their special gifts and temperaments which can be arranged in some order of merit. The most sweeping generalizations have been made on this subject—there must certainly be a difference discernible on a large scale between the inhabitants of Europe and those of China, but the natural tendency is to transfer the “average” variations of large masses to the isolates in these groups, and, by a most fallacious parody of reasoning, to justify not merely group, but also individual superiority.

Thus, the general opinion runs, the special gifts of those who inhabit Europe seem to lie in enterprise and initiative—or, as Professor Burt has put it, “the Nordic and Mediterranean races are the most strongly conative”. Their striving and unquiet ambitions, the restlessness of their minds, have led them to tremendous triumphs in their application of common-sense to the problems of the world in which they find themselves. It is not so much that they have a greater talent for inventiveness—in this they may fall short in some respects of the Chinese—but they are able to adapt what comes their way by linking together the many factors of their experiences and marshalling them to serve some great end, as they have most notably done in U.S.A. and in the U.S.S.R. They have taken discoveries made by physicists and chemists in their laboratories and harnessed them to their industrial system; they have applied mathematics and science. And as they have succeeded in making these discoveries co-operate, so they have learnt to build equally co-operative business organizations on a scale great enough to scare opposition. Their talent for organization has been displayed equally in the creation of great States, especially formidable in those departments where organization counts so greatly—war and military expansion. Hence the trouble.

These gifts—or if one might call them so, emotional dispositions—have often been cultivated at the expense of the æsthetic sensibilities, of which the Mongolian races have a greater share. The refined and delicate craftsman, with an innate appreciation of the beauty of line and form, is more frequently found among Chinese than among Europeans. The careful, meticulous artistry, so characteristic of their painting, writing and carving, could never survive in the more socially ruthless atmosphere of the Occident; the precise and brooding quality of their artistic achievements finds its parallel in a very widespread devotion to philosophy. The tenets of Buddhism and Confucianism have found a ready acceptance amid the patiently toiling millions of the Celestial Kingdom, expressing both ideals and ethical aims which could

never have lived in the countries of the West, where profundity of thought, and of æsthetic appreciation, has so often been sacrificed to the high speed of activity and living. It cannot be pure accident that the home of the great religions of the world is Asia. And not only have they applied their care and industry to the practice of the arts, but equally so have they lavished the same sort of painstaking attention on the cultivation of the earth, especially where it needed irrigation. The highly complicated systems of canals, channels and runnels which often mark the Chinese landscape are as much a manifestation of their genius.

But even here it is necessary to pause and repeat that these generalizations cannot bear over-much weight: there are, roughly speaking, three main branches to the European races—Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean, and each shows such divergency of temperament that it is impossible to ignore them or to treat them as one. The introvert Nordic, of a stubborn individualistic cast of mind, is sharply opposed to the Alpine, whose character is less given to enterprise and speculation, and both in their turn contrast with the extravert Mediterranean, quick to feel and act, responsive to the dramatic and highly coloured. Nor is it really possible to ignore the great differences between Chinese and Japanese, though popular fancy once tended to link them. The Chinese have acted as tutors to the Japanese, who in no uncertain way have often “bettered the instruction” and, being ready pupils, have not only assimilated what the teacher could tell them, but, by their almost uncanny insight, have learnt from the West how to make up the deficiencies in their education. So they have learnt how to co-operate and organize—there is nothing in China to parallel that amazing concentration whereby fifteen business interests control altogether 70% of Japan’s trade and industry; one great house alone, Mitsui, is master of 15%—but they have copied, too, those less estimable features, and as they have built an imposing military machine, just by so much have they shown their moral inferiority to the Chinese. It was the Chinese of a hundred years ago “who believed that government must in the first place be by power of example and moral suasion. When they came to know the European order of society (which the Japanese copied) they were amazed to find that it did not regard the scholar, the cultivator of spiritual values, as first in importance, the farmer as next, then the man of commerce and the soldier as least.”<sup>1</sup>

These important qualifications on the sweeping generalizations which are so readily made ought all the more to be borne in mind

<sup>1</sup> *Christian News Letter*, No. 74, Supplement, E. R. Hughes.

when one realizes that Dr. Haddon<sup>1</sup> has arranged mankind into not less than fifty groups, with distinctive physical features, and only very broadly falling into about fifteen larger divisions. Thus the possibilities of variety are enormously increased, and ought to act as a corrective to the statements which are so frequently heard about the temperaments of the "negro" race—to use a question-begging term, scientifically inaccurate, but useful at this point, for the negro has been the subject of the most extravagant judgments, both for praise and blame. To him has been ascribed a richly sensitive appreciation of art and music, not expressed in the idiom with which we are familiar, but yet providing a varied and effective outlet for his emotions, with a feeling for colour and a sensibility which is rarely matched in the artistic achievements of other peoples. Nor are these confined to his plastic or musical accomplishments—they are carried over into his personal relations with human beings, endowing him with a generous measure of friendship, marked by personal affection, good temper and a rich and humane sense of humour which is capable of bubbling over into the most infectious laughter and enjoyment. He suffers, too, from the defects of his qualities—his strange collapses into the depths of despair, the quick transition to depression—in short, he is, on Jung's analysis, an extravert.

There are two outstanding features in the negro life, as we can see it in Africa, which mark him off most distinctly from other races, at least those which inhabit Europe. The first of these is that the negro lives a life dominated by religion. Not a single action or a single thought falls outside the framework of his religious beliefs, no matter how crude or undeveloped these may appear to the critical or more sophisticated observer, especially if he comes from a society which in its ordinary working day is secular. As Mary Kingsley<sup>2</sup> wrote about West African institutions, "religion has so firm a grasp upon the native mind that it influences everything he does. It is not a thing apart, as the religion of the European is at times. The African cannot say 'Oh, that's all right from a religious point of view, but one must be practical'. To be practical, to get on in the world, to live the day and night through, he must be on working terms with the great spirits round him." His outlook on life is, in this respect, more akin to that of the peasant or serf of mediæval Europe, whose actions were regulated by a pervading religious influence, however different in kind it was, for the animism of Africa would contrast strongly with the more systematized, more rigid, and in some ways less "spiritual" discipline of the Catholic Church. And even

<sup>1</sup> *The Races of Mankind*, A. C. Haddon.

<sup>2</sup> *Mary Kingsley*, Gwynn, Penguin edition, p. 106.

when the African has long departed from his native haunts, when he has inhabited another continent for perhaps hundreds of years, this strange religious aura clings to him, sometimes with lyrical beauty, as in negro spirituals before they were commercialized and became a concert-hall entertainment, sometimes with grim extravagant hysteria, when he seems to recall the witch dances of his native forests and to hear the frenzied clang of drum calling him from the apparent civilization of twentieth-century America to the primeval darkness of the Congo.<sup>1</sup>

And as the native African felt himself to be a member of an all-powerful spirit life, so, too, his purely secular existence, so far as he had one, was bound up with that of his community. He has learnt the interdependence of everything and everyone—he is at one with the great heart of things, not merely in his relations with the spirit world, but with his neighbour, his clan and his community, in every aspect of the workaday world. On him there rests a collective responsibility; he has learnt to sink his individuality in the life of the group in which he is born—he takes his share in supporting the weak and aged, in bearing the penalty which attaches to wrongdoing committed by one of his group, in carrying on unbroken the corporate life of his clan. His ambition is not concentrated on the acquisition of personal riches which will lift him head and shoulders above his fellows, nor is his tribal chief his lord and master in the sense that he arrogates to himself the right to dispose of tribal property and land as he himself thinks fit—certainly he has no mandate to alienate to any outsider what is the possession of the group, whatever the price may be; for he is the trustee and not the owner, whose judgment and decisions must always be guided by the best interests, not of the individual, but of the group. To the native African generosity was the cardinal virtue—in short, he lived in a society which was perhaps the happiest illustration of Kropotkin's theory of "Mutual Aid". How drastic is the change when he is divorced from these two principles and transferred into a world which is strange, not so much through its developed mechanical achievements, but through its ignorance or disregard of his religion and his communal feeling—morals, ethics, standards all go—untrained to the ruthless striving of the confessed individualist, he is hopelessly at a

<sup>1</sup> Yet for all the connection which exists between the African and his spirit world and for the hold which religion has on his mind, no great religious system has come out of Africa, nothing comparable to Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism or Christianity. His religion does not lend itself to formal exposition, nor is it an object for export. In much the same way Africa has not known highly organized States erected by negroes, except possibly in Uganda. The emirates of Nigeria were founded under Moslem inspiration and are rather a thing apart.

disadvantage, his capacity for toil is exploited and he becomes the victim of forces which leave him bewildered, a stranger in a strange land of alien beliefs and standards of conduct.

Such in very brief outline is the popularly held conception of three of the world's "families"—inadequate in many ways, and ignoring the problems of other races, like the "brown", whose qualities have been similarly appraised or disparaged, and whose fundamental character is so often at variance with the fanciful picture which ignorant romancers have painted for us. It is impossible to comprise within a single definition the rich and varied kaleidoscope of human character, except by doing injustice to all scientific method or by rubbing out precisely those features which give mankind its value and its worth. Still less is it possible to build imposing and self-satisfying theories to justify the inequalities that exist as though they were pre-ordained in the natural scheme of things. And any reluctance we may feel, on consideration, to affix psychological labels to great masses of the world's populations ought to be enormously increased when we realize that anthropological science refuses to be dogmatic on the origins of these races, while the physiologist himself confesses his bewilderment as to the exact origin of differences of colour or the reason for their uneven distribution over the earth's surface. If science, with all the resources at its command and with its determination to weigh all the evidence, cannot give us an answer in matters which should be capable of quantitative analysis, we ought all the more carefully to investigate conclusions dogmatically stated on what are as yet imponderables of social psychology.

It is taken, by and large, as substantially true that as we get nearer the equator we find that the native, not always the aboriginal, inhabitants are darker-skinned. But this "nigrescence" is by no means uniform—nor is it true that those living in the hottest parts of the earth are always blacker. Lord Raglan points out that the Indians of the Amazon, which is certainly one of the hottest regions, are not black, but yellowish-brown, approximating in colour to the Esquimaux living in one of the coldest, while natives of Ceylon are less black in colour than the ancient inhabitants of South India who live to the north of them. Again Ehreulich has stated that people dwelling in a cool dry climate but exposed to the sun may be darker than those where the climate is hot and moist but their homes in dark forests, while sea-farers and coast-dwellers have a deeper pigmentation than closely related tribes who live in the wooded interior. There are a host of subtle influences created by environment which bear upon this question of coloration—for instance, those in a high altitude are



generally fairer. Haddon states that there is no apparent reason why the Australian aborigines, and still more the Tasmanians, extinct since 1876, should have or have had the characteristics which we usually associate with the interior of Africa—dark colouring and broad noses; the climate of Tasmania, at any rate, is not vastly different from that of England.

Again, it is not proved as true beyond contradiction that the darker skin<sup>1</sup> of those who inhabit the tropics gives them a greater measure of protection against the heat or against what used to be considered the dangerous actinic strength of the sun's rays. It would appear that the negro has a denser cuticle than the white man and is comparatively insensitive to the heat of the sun, but that is not the same as saying that he is dark because of the sun. In short, it is almost impossible to lay down any law on the subject. Colour is probably the result of a wide variety of differing conditions—some original sport of pigmentation made more stable by natural selection, responding perhaps in a way as yet not fully explained to the conditions of climate (in which unrecorded changes may have taken place) or of environment. Innumerable permutations of these factors have resulted in the bewildering variety we know.

Associated with any discussion about colour must go some consideration of the salient facial characteristics, which are often as strongly marked as the complexion. The broad nose of the negro, his bulging lips and projecting jaws are features as prominent as his colour, and it has been suggested, I believe, by Professor Lyde, that the combination of these three was made essential by the necessity for getting as much air as possible into his lungs, since in the tropics there is less oxygen in the air than in more temperate climates; but here again scientific opinion tends to throw doubt on at least one of these features, the broad nose, being a distinctive badge of race, rather regarding it as the result of climatic conditions. There is, however, a considerable importance attached to these features, from the æsthetic point of view of the ordinary Europeans whose canons of taste regard them as ugly, and as a result far too frequently what amounts to a moral judgment is made from a prejudice which is purely conventional, and which is ingrained in the average white man, or acquired from the ignorant opinions of his elders when he is young. It is, at bottom, an entirely irrational aversion which education and tolerance should remove, but it is certainly one which has done much harm, and is often expressed in terms that cannot fail to be deeply humiliating to any negro who hears it.

The aversion which so many white people feel towards the

<sup>1</sup> For a general discussion see *The Menace of Colour*, Gregory.

negro races, based on æsthetic dislike, allied often to what amounts to intellectual contempt, has a parallel in the feelings which are entertained towards the "yellow" races, but here it is not merely dislike, but almost fear, rooted in alarm at the frugality, intelligence and consequent efficiency of these peoples. As a general statement, the yellow races are better able than either white or black to withstand the greater extremes of climate, which are much more difficult to bear than continuous cold or continuous heat. The vast ranges of temperature and also of humidity which are found in the great continental masses of Eastern Asia have bred people with the necessary physical conditions to tolerate them, so that the yellow hue of the typical Chinese is due to a thicker layer of fat beneath the cutis, or true skin, enabling him to meet the swift changes of weather. In addition to this advantage, in the remote past he lived on the edge of those vast areas which were subject to glaciation.

The alternation of periods of glaciation and tropical heat has had, of course, vast influences on the physical surface of the earth—the advance or retreat of the great ice-cap has given us many of the features of hill and valley that we know today, but it is probable also that it has affected the human race in various ways. Glaciation requires fairly high latitude and a high degree of humidity and has at least in its influence, so Ellsworth Huntington<sup>1</sup> says, extended to within thirty degrees of the equator—this, broadly speaking, means that it has covered those areas which seem to be the homes of the white and yellow races, and it has not affected those of the black; as the last glacial age waned and the ice-cap retreated north, those races living on its southern borders, in the northern hemisphere, probably followed it up closely, yet lived under conditions that put a premium on hardihood and on the use of native intelligence, demanding likewise energy, both of mind and body. The natural result of this was to harden the human stock, to inculcate in it habits of frugality; in course of time it even modified the physical form, for diet ceased to be mainly vegetarian; the greater power of mastication needed for meat-eating may have affected the shape of the head by strengthening the jaws and side muscles of the face. The negro, on the other hand, found his way into areas where the climatic conditions were especially favourable to the virulent activity of disease germs, and the consequent heavy mortality among such stocks promoted, as a measure of self-preservation, a high fertility rate. This over-development of sexual activity has proved inimical to intellectual capacity, and it is perhaps in this that we may find some reason for the intellectual inferiority with which

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization and Climate*, p. 223.

the African is so frequently, and perhaps so unjustly, stigmatized. To this subject we will return later.

When all is said and done, if we regard colour as the main criterion in our estimation of races, we are trusting to a guide which is far from infallible. Even among the "black" races, colour is fugitive—a sort of bleaching occurs under certain circumstances, such as extreme fright, old age or fainting; albinos are not unknown, while certain shaded parts of the body are much lighter in tone, becoming practically yellow on the inside of the palms, the soles, and also at birth. Anthropologists<sup>1</sup> prefer to use the hair as the more reliable method of grouping mankind, according to its cross-section; for an oval section gives the Caucasian his wavy hair, round is the reason for the lankiness of the Mongolian's hair, while the Negro, Melanesian and kindred races of negritos, as well as Bushmen, have hair which is flat in section. It is obvious, too, that the shape of the head can be similarly used, and numberless measurements have been taken in making the cephalic index the basis for a classification of mankind. But in the end it would appear that Maciver's summary is true<sup>2</sup>: "Anthropology confirms the conclusion derived from history. Whatever criterion of race we consider most decisive, colour of skin, eyes or hair, texture of hair, cephalic, orbital, gnathic or nasal index, it is impossible to regard the somatic character so chosen as an adequate criterion of psychological or social type as well."

While in modern times it is the relations between white Europeans and darker-skinned peoples that have produced so many problems, we find that in earlier days and in other lands contacts between races of different colours produced somewhat dissimilar results. The caste system of India is one of the products of this inter-racial collision, for according to a very widely held theory, it was a difference of race allied with a tradition of military conquest that fastened upon that country its distinctive social system. The Sanskrit word *varna*, which is used in the Mahabharata and translated as "caste", means rather "colour", not so much in reference to light and dark as to the distinctive colour of the three superior castes—the white Brahmans, red Kshatriyas, and yellow Vaisyas who represented the Aryan conquering peoples triumphing over the dark-skinned aborigines of Turanian and Dravidian origin, in the north by military invasion, in the south by peaceful penetration and the onslaught of a superior cultural type. The final moulding of the caste system into its rigid outlines seems to have taken place during a long period of

<sup>1</sup> *Races of Mankind*, Haddon, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Community*, Maciver, p. 275.

some three hundred years about A.D. 650 to 950, which in India, as in Europe, were the Dark Ages, and as we see the feudal system with its emphasis on status emerge from these centuries in the West, so in India the stereotyped ranks and grades of caste, not merely as principles of social division but also a comprehensive system of life, were poured from a similar matrix—just the epoch when, threatened with confusion, disturbance and overthrow, a conquering people would strive to protect their own position and to preserve, in as pure a condition as was possible, their own racial type—and this they succeeded in doing, particularly in northern India, by the infinite complexities and delicate, yet tremendously strong, organization of caste. A pure colour distinction would not last long in a climate such as that of India—there was, under the Mogul dynasty, some attempt to preserve an aristocracy based on that—the alternative was a social hierarchy which would serve a similar purpose, and be independent of the more fugitive somatic characteristics, and so we find that in Southern India the Brahmans are as black as the lowest castes.<sup>1</sup> One writer has even described caste as social Imperialism—perfected by experience and maintained by religious sanction. Its three conceptions—inequality based on birth, gradation of professions and their inequality, and the restriction on marriage outside one's own sub-group—correspond very closely to the theories by which the dominant white society in S. Africa justifies its own position.

Generally speaking, the prejudice of colour has always borne more heavily on the darker-skinned people—whether it is a mere accident or coincidence, one cannot say—but it is interesting to observe that coloured people themselves are not exempt from similar prejudice towards others. Thus we are told that in the interior of Africa the black tribes, exposed to the full heat of the sun, tend to feel animosity against the forest hunters who pursue their nomadic calling under different conditions and are generally of a lighter type, almost yellow in tone, while in Panama the “white Indians” living in conditions of greater shade are avoided by the more normally coloured natives. The same attitude exists among the more sophisticated peoples—for example, in South Africa, where an already difficult problem is further exacerbated by the mixed race, offspring of black and white, called, illogically enough, “Coloured”. “There are three sets of people in South Africa: the Whites, the Coloured, and the Natives. The prejudice against the Natives by the Coloured is as bad, if not worse than the prejudice of the unchanged Southerner toward the Negro. A

<sup>1</sup> *British Encyclopædia*, Art. “Caste”. *Peoples of India*, Anderson, pp. 37 ff. *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Risley, Introd., p. 1. *India: its Administration and Progress*, Strachey, p. 327. *Caste and Democracy*, K. M. Panikkar, pp. 17–18.

Coloured person would not marry, would not be seen in the street walking with a Native. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Here it is not mere racial prejudice but an obscure feeling of hatred for the half of their "composition", half almost of their bloodstream, which has made them, under the social organization in which they live, ineligible for the position and rank to which the other half would entitle them. Nor indeed will the Bantu Men's Social Centre, a Johannesburg club for educated Bantu, admit as a member any one who is not prepared to be regarded as a Bantu without qualification—thus cutting out the Coloured.<sup>2</sup> The evil and the good which arise from the relations of black and white, or yellow and white races can be judged by the way in which either race treats the offspring of its mixed marriages, apart from any question of biological fitness, and the rather sad fate to which the Coloured people of South Africa see themselves condemned is a significant commentary on the dangers likely to arise from miscegenation.

We have mentioned the aversion which certain physical characteristics common especially among black people rouse in whites—but of course it works the other way round as well. Africans, whose keenness of perception uses smell as a racial distinctive, feel repugnance for Europeans for just the same reason as Europeans feel repugnance for them, while we must remember that white facial characteristics, as well as manners, can be as aesthetically distasteful to the Africans as theirs to us. There is also a large, rather unexplored, psychological hinterland in the sex feelings which these races entertain for each other. The matter is put in a nutshell by the negro writer, James Weldon Johnson: "Through it all I discerned one clear and certain truth; in the core of the heart of the American race problem the sex factor is rooted; rooted so deeply that it is not always recognized when it shows at the surface. Other factors are obvious and are the ones we dare to deal with; but regardless of how we deal with these, the race situation will continue to be acute as long as the sex factor persists. Taken alone, it furnishes a sufficient mainspring for the rationalization of all the complexes of white racial superiority. It may be innate: I do not know. But I do know that it is strong and bitter; and that its strength and bitterness are magnified and intensified by the white man's perception, more or less, of the Negro complex of sexual superiority."<sup>3</sup> That sentiments of this character have a tremendous bearing on the whole problem of

<sup>1</sup> *Aggrey of Africa*, E. W. Smith, p. 167. For the rivalries and animosities between Indians and Burmans, with their economic causes, see *Trials in Burma*, Collis (1936), pp. 183-234.

<sup>2</sup> *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, p. 277.

<sup>3</sup> *Along this Way*, p. 80 (Penguin edition).

race relations is demonstrated by the more factual and statistically analysed results reached by intensive forms of questioning recorded by Dr. MacCrone, whose book *Race Attitudes in South Africa* contains the results of his investigations into these and cognate problems, based on the replies of different groups of people—thus, he finds a similar significance in the feeling of fear entertained by so many white women towards black men, while hostility is the predominant note sounded by white men, and a similar hostility exists between white and black women, so that the prevalent obsession with race purity is a rationalization of an effort to keep at bay a potentially superior sex rival.<sup>1</sup>

Not all European peoples feel this racial and colour prejudice with the same intensity—it has often been observed that Latin and South European races have much less difficulty in accommodating themselves to the point of view of others than the Northern peoples. For one thing, men living on the northern shores of the Mediterranean have felt at much closer range the powers of darker races living on the southern shores.<sup>2</sup> They have seen, in time past, the prowess of the Barbary corsairs; the history of Spain, for instance, has been greatly modified by the Moorish occupation, they have had to compete on far more equal terms with men of a different colour and a different creed, and when their early explorers penetrated to the East they were met by civilizations, cultures and armed states surpassing at every point the kingdoms which had sent them as ambassadors. The English representatives at the Court of the Great Mogul would receive a vastly different impression of the capacities of coloured races (however slight the variation in shade) from that of an English adventurer sitting in an African kraal. Indeed, the tendency is for Anglo-Saxon races to regard Latins as perhaps only one stage removed from coloured—an attitude of mind which is not always shared by the Germans: it has been observed that in Latin-America German bachelors with trade connections married into native families, while “Englishmen and Americans were unable to enter social life without reservations and reticences”.<sup>3</sup> This barrier is often raised to an insurmountable height by length of residence, but it is confined very largely to “out-of-office” hours—it does not prevent fairly close co-operation in the business world or in the field of administration, so long as the main distinction is kept in mind and the native “knows his place” in the numberless points where

<sup>1</sup> MacCrone, *op. cit.*, pp. 298–302.

<sup>2</sup> The influence of Fascist and Nazi theories on Italy can well be illustrated by the decree of January 1940, under which all persons of mixed blood in her African territories were to be classed as natives and Italian parents forbidden by law to recognize their own mixed offspring (*Africa and the Atlantic Charter*, App., p. 53).

<sup>3</sup> *Along this Way*, p. 124.

business and social life are apt to overlap. It is when different nationals meet in a cosmopolitan society such as was to be found in Tangier prior to 1939 that the ingrained prejudices of some white people stand out in rather glaring contrast—and one must admit that the Englishman appeared to find it more difficult than others to tolerate a situation in which to a large extent there was practically no racial discrimination based on colour. To him Tangier was the same as India or Kenya or some remote outpost where his skin bestowed on him almost divine right.

This variation in antipathy has borne its fruit in the different colonial practices by which European governments have approached their coloured subject populations. Portugal, for instance, which in the seventeenth century aimed at assimilating any negro who was anxious to adopt even a parody of European standards and give him an opportunity for advancement, has known a coloured minister, senator and deputies, and in spite of unsavoury features in colonial government, mainly due to the operation of capitalist combines on large concessions, black men are regarded as citizens of Portugal with full rights. Similarly in France; for centuries well-bred and educated negroes have been welcomed there, received their education, received also legal recognition, received—perhaps most important of all—recognition of their status as men and citizens, so that a negro coming from the Southern United States remarks at once the different social climate, the freedom from the brooding fear which hovers over him in case he oversteps the narrow limits which intolerance and a wide range of taboos have imposed on his most innocent activities in his own country. Negroes have been appointed as deputy for Guadeloupe, governor of Equatorial Africa and to other positions, and the rigid caste system which exists in the British Colonial Empire finds no counterpart in the French. The great difficulty for France lies in a reconciliation of divergent political and economic policies, since vast sums of French money have been poured into the colonies, and a mercantilist conception of their function and the part they should play in the economic life of metropolitan France does not make it easier for them to encourage centres for negro civilization and freedom. So while France often succeeds in gaining the allegiance of some negroes and to a certain extent their loyalty and even affection, she does so at the expense of the negro race as a whole, by enrolling its leaders in her own ranks and endowing them with the white man's psychology, and where economics are concerned, inducing them to share in the exploitation of their fellows.<sup>1</sup> They thus become the "mental slaves" of France, without any conception of the pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Worlds of Colour", W. E. B. DuBois, *Foreign Affairs*, April 1925.

gress of their race outside the framework of French government and economics. Her use of colonial troops aids this process, while her system of education attaches them more closely to her culture and civilization—in fact, education has a political rôle of vital importance. The success of French colonizing methods has therefore been greatest where the population is comparatively homogeneous both in colour and background, and not in the more complicated areas of North Africa, Algeria and Tunisia.

The achievements of the Dutch in the administration of their large and valuable colonial empire have earned them the respect of other Powers, for they have succeeded in applying the lessons of science to the solution of medical, nutritive and production problems while retaining basic native ideas and customs, without bringing about a premature revolution in the economy of the lands they control. Their rule is authoritarian, and as such does not satisfy the demands and aspirations of the native intelligentsia, for they have limited the spread of higher education; but, on the other hand, they have kept the land in the possession of the natives, encouraged home consumption of agricultural products, provided credit and earmarked a large proportion of the annual budget for medical and social services and for those measures designed to protect the valuable soil of the East Indies from erosion. In Surinam, for instance, in the West, education has been compulsory since 1874, and 30% of the budget is reserved for educational and health services.<sup>1</sup> They have refused to erect a colour bar, even encouraged intermarriage between the races, and used the offspring very extensively in the administration of the Empire, opening both in theory and practice all such posts to men of mixed blood, some of the ablest of whom have risen very high in the service, while a much wider variety of occupation is open to the ordinary "Eurasian". In India and Ceylon, minor clerkships and shop assistance are almost the only avenues open to the children of mixed marriages, who have to face the contempt and intolerance of the two races who gave them birth, with disastrous results to their self-respect. It is one of the anomalies of the development of social psychology that the same race should have evolved on such different lines in South Africa and in the Dutch East Indies.

German colour policy started off with a great advantage in not proclaiming any high moral purpose such as the "paramountcy of native rights", or proposing the assimilation of native and German ideas. It introduced a money economy to make possible a system of taxation, it spent only as much money as was necessary to train natives in the less responsible administrative

<sup>1</sup> *Netherlands Overseas Territories*, R.I.I.A. Information Papers, No. 28.



posts, it allowed a certain measure of latitude to chieftains in adjusting cases on the basis of native custom, it applied the most recent of scientific research discoveries to the solution of economic problems and to the exploitation of colonial territories, but it was completely frank in this exploitation, in the employment of force to overcome what so many other Europeans have called African "laziness", in its forced-labour policy, and most of all in its attitude to the land. "The decision to colonize South-West Africa could after all mean nothing else but this—that the native tribes would have to give up the lands on which they had previously grazed their stock in order that the white man should have the grazing for his own."<sup>1</sup> German administration was thus frank and severe, but in the Cameroons it earned the reputation of being just.<sup>2</sup> In South-West Africa, however, it reduced the Hereroes in 1905 from 90,000 to 15,000, and of a total land area of 322,000 square miles left the natives only 4,000. Needless to say it did not worry about a colour bar, but simply submitted the people to a strict and completely utilitarian rule, occasionally modified by such protests as the more liberal elements in German home politics were able from time to time to make effectively heard.

While the U.S.S.R. is not perplexed with problems of quite the same character as the Western Powers, we must remember that within its vast frontiers there are more than a hundred races and language groups (in 1936 children of the U.S.S.R. were taught in school in 112 languages), of disparate attainments and possibilities, but no one stands in the same relation to another, as, for example, the South African white and Bantu, economically united by overriding circumstances, but yet divided on every political and social ground, nor yet like the French and the West African or Equatorial natives, where the attempt is being made to create a uniformity by the imposition or inculcation of an overpowering nationalist civilization and culture. Lenin called Tsarist Russia "a prison of nations" where ignorance, illiteracy and internecine hatreds were not only tolerated but encouraged; now, in theory, and, as far as one can judge, in practice, there is no inequality of State and civic rights, and no imposition of the many restrictions on marriage, travel, elected positions—or even on choice of hotels. "Statehood is divorced from nationality or race."<sup>3</sup> It is not therefore surprising that Communism should have proved, in its externals at least, an attractive creed for many

<sup>1</sup> Paul von Rohrbach in *Deutsche Kolonial Wirtschaft*, quoted by Steer in *Judgment on German Africa*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Germany and the Cameroons*, pp. 298, 316, 360, 419.

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet Communism*, Webb, pp. 153-4, 1126. Stalin was the first Commissar for Nationalities in the first Lenin Government (1917) and has always been interested in the problem.

coloured races—even for those in the Dutch East Indies—though its characteristic forms of economic organization run counter to many traits in the native mind. It is the social creed of complete equality that calls—the Communist Party in the United States four or five years ago announced a great increase in its membership, an increase largely made up of coloured people, but there was nothing like a mass movement, for nothing would, or could, have antagonized the bulk of the American people still more fiercely against the Negro<sup>1</sup> than to find him entering the ranks of that Party whose aims and tenets are so opposed to the prevailing sentiment of American political and social life. It does, however, serve a purpose to be able to label any protest against exploitation as the result of nefarious Communist intrigues, and there is perhaps no more familiar figure in Colonial records than the “Agitator”—as though that alone serves to discredit any labour leader or offer a justifiable chance to imprison or exile him.

We have discussed in this chapter some of the economic, political and religious causes of the problem of race and colour, the attitudes of different European Powers to their coloured subjects, we have seen the prejudice that exists vitiating the relations between human beings, and we can surmise that young people in their developing years are conditioned to a like frame of mind, and so share with their elders the prevalent antipathies. Black and white have always had a symbolic significance to people of the latter colour, indicative of good and bad; black is so early equated, too, with dirt, darkness is so often dreaded—and so a whole emotional complex is built up on colour symbolism, which must have its effect on the child’s mind. But there is a good deal of evidence to show that the attitude towards people of colour which later hardens into prejudice is not “instinctive”, but is acquired from social environment, is an infectious disease for which practically no cure has been found for the majority of patients. As McDougall says, “a child brought up in the Southern States of the American Union learns first to think of man in general: but later he learns to discriminate between white men and ‘niggers’, and their differences become so accentuated and their similarities so neglected that, but for his command of the word *man*, he would be in danger of forgetting that black and white men are varieties of the one species, *Man*”.<sup>2</sup> It is only too true that education at present accentuates the feeling and aids only too powerfully in the creation of this antipathy by a wrong emphasis on certain aspects of history, by a—perhaps unconscious—selection of black, brown

<sup>1</sup> *Along this Way*, J. W. Johnson, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Psychology*, p. 95. See also MacCrone, *op. cit.*, pp. 259–63; 293–6; *Christianity and the Race Problem*, Oldham, pp. 46–8.

and yellow people as the "villains of the piece" in stories, plays and films, and the absence of any urge to teach the solidarity and underlying likenesses which unite not merely the races of the world, but the individuals who make up this vast agglomeration.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE COLONIAL EMPIRE

"For *this* they have engrossed and pil'd up  
The cankered heaps of strange-achieved gold."

DuBois, the well-known Negro leader, once declared that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the Colour Line, and if we enquire what are the causes that first drew the line and still maintain it, the almost inevitable answer must be "Fear". It is a fear which the white races feel towards the black and yellow—it is, in some cases, the fear of those who have been first in the field and, having made a corner for themselves of positions of supremacy and profit, are alarmed at the prospect of being challenged—and successfully challenged at that. It is a fear that sheer weight of numbers will overbear the defenders of an economic system. There is the fear, too, that the standards of living which a certain proportion of the white race has laboriously secured for itself will be undermined by peoples who at present are able and willing, or perhaps it would be better to say forced, to exist at levels which would make life itself impossible for the white man. This fear is naturally much sharper in the minds of those who live among coloured populations, but it is almost as prominent in the calculations of those who derive large profits from the fact of this low standard of life. Any concerted demand, any stirring of the mass of opinion, would inevitably lie in the direction of higher wages, in the enjoyment of a larger share in the commodities produced, in some easing of the terrible strain of labour necessary to pay taxes, in the participation in just those things which the white man himself so highly values.

Let us look at the situation as shown in figures. It is notoriously difficult to get reliable estimates for the world's population as divided between different races, but let us take a few examples which are not really dependent on such figures as have been given. The area of the earth is approximately 53 million square miles; of these, 47 million are politically dominated by the white race. The area of Australia is given in the *Statesman's Year Book*

as 2,974,581 square miles, its population about 7,000,000, with an average density of 2.39 persons to the square mile, ranging from 21 in Victoria to 0.09 in the Northern Territory. Of this vast expanse a considerable proportion (estimates vary between one-third and one-sixth) is uninhabitable, but the psychological effect upon the Japanese of the scantiness of population compared with the size of the continent can readily be imagined; 72,000,000 Japanese live in a country which is one-twentieth the size of Australia, with a density, in Japan proper, of 469 to the square mile, or of 3,040 per square mile of *arable* land. Canada is the same size as Europe—its population but 10,000,000; China, with half the area of the United States, has four times as many inhabitants; the following ten overseas possessions of European Powers:<sup>1</sup> Algeria, French Morocco, Kenya, Nigeria, S.W. Africa, Belgian Congo, Libya, "Italian" Somaliland, French Indo-China and the Netherlands Indies, have a total population of 131,000,000 natives—the European whites number 1,383,000! If we take Africa alone we find that in the various colonies to every 10,000 natives there are the following numbers of Europeans; Uganda, 6; Nigeria, 6; Gold Coast, 9; French Equatorial Africa, 10; French West Africa, 15; Tanganyika, 16; Congo, 24; Kenya, 65; Belgian Katanga, 65; Northern Rhodesia, 84; Angola (including Mulattos), 200.

Or to look at it from another point of view—the population of Africa is estimated to be between 138,000,000 and 163,000,000; its total area about 12,250,000 square miles. The British (including the Union of South Africa) govern one-quarter of the area, and nearly a third of the population, the French a quarter and a third respectively, the Belgians a thirteenth and a tenth, the Portuguese an eighteenth and a nineteenth, Ethiopia and Liberia, the two nominally independent states, a thirteenth of the land, and a twentieth of the people.<sup>2</sup>

What, briefly, are those conditions of life which white men regard as essential and desirable and for which they are prepared to wage unremitting strife? First come the really necessary things—food, both adequate and varied, clothing, housing and, surprisingly, privacy. In all these four particulars the standards which the majority of black peoples enjoy fall lamentably short of those experienced by the most wretchedly poverty-stricken peasants of Europe, even taking into consideration the different climates for which they are intended. In 1936 the Colonial Office appointed a Committee of the Economic Advisory Council to investigate this subject; three years later its Report was issued, and contained the following sentences, sufficiently striking in an

<sup>1</sup> *In Quest of Empire*, p. 75 (Foreign Policy Assoc. of America).

<sup>2</sup> *The Atlantic Charter and Africa*, p. 112.

official publication to shake the complacency of the most self-satisfied. "In almost every part of the Colonial Empire the income of a very large proportion of the population is a long way below the minimum required for satisfactory nutrition." Speaking generally, it declared that Colonial dietaries are deficient, in varying degrees, in animal proteins, calcium, phosphorus, iron, sodium and various vitamins. Unsuitable feeding is considered a main cause of high infantile mortality, which exceeds 200 per thousand live births in many parts of the Colonial Empire, and sometimes even exceeds 300. This latter figure is *ten times* that of South Australia, which, with a rate of 30.50 per thousand, has the lowest infantile mortality rate in the world. That of England and Wales is 57. In India the figures reach staggering totals, for it is calculated that in Bombay the death-rate per thousand births in one-room tenements was 577! 95% of the working-class families live in such rooms.<sup>1</sup>

Colonial dietaries are predominantly vegetarian, relatively small quantities of animal products are consumed, and many colonial people are dependent on a single crop for their main supply of food. Not only does this grim death-rate show the ravages of under-nourishment in infants, but even in Capetown, where conditions are controlled to a much greater extent than in many parts of the Colonies, the statistics for 1938 (June 30th) showed that deaths under 25 years of age were 17% of the total among Europeans, but among non-Europeans 58%. The death rate of the latter from tubercular diseases was 5.8 times as great as among the former, while in the Union as a whole it was ten times as great in 1941<sup>2</sup>; for pneumonia and bronchitis, it was six times greater. In infants under 1 year of age the death rates from measles, respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases were respectively 2.3, 4.8 and 6.2 times as great in the one race as in the other, while for infants between 1 and 2 years the disparity was even greater, being 5.9, 6—and, most appallingly—23.6 times! The 1941 infantile mortality rate for Europeans was 35.76 per 1,000, for non-Europeans 128.78, while maternal mortality showed a ratio of 2.01 to 3.88.<sup>2</sup>

It used to be a commonplace among the minor romantic poets of the nineteenth century to sigh for a solitude which could be found only among the Bedouin of the desert or amid some far-off savage tribe. Far from it—the Bedouin or the African native can rarely be alone: he lives his whole life in the full eye of his neighbours, his meals are often so much a part of the ritual of existence

<sup>1</sup> *India Today*, Dutt, pp. 58 and 352.

<sup>2</sup> *The Cape Town Sun*, November 7th, 1941. The *South African Outlook* (October 1941) pertinently asked, Why, when a baby is born, do its parents at once begin to pay burial insurance on its behalf?

that they are all partaken in common or in the open, with an elaborate code to govern them ; a very rigid conservatism formerly kept the Bantu, for instance, at home, and it was extremely rare for him to go beyond an ill-defined tribal boundary, even in company, much less alone. Possibly he was afraid of the spirit world around him ; privacy of his domestic life was not one of his ideals. This feeling is of course much more marked the farther north one goes ; Mediterranean peoples do not share it with anything like the same intensity as an Englishman, for whom it has often become an obsession, and so the insular-minded Northerner is almost revolted by the communal life of the native African.

But even an African must have a house or hut in which to live, and the tragedy is that when he exchanges the latter for the former, the standard so rapidly collapses. A hut which has become insanitary can be burnt—not so a house, whether it be of brick or of flattened-out petrol tins ; if his family becomes too large for one hut, then it is a comparatively simple matter to erect another, but the problem of securing another house is almost insuperable. Then, again, the system of hut-taxation, apart from its crushing nature, is a deliberate encouragement to overcrowding. To illustrate the first point, Melland and Young (*African Dilemma*, 1937) quote an example from Nyasaland, where from five districts growing cotton and rice, the total profit and wages came to £13,000, yet the tax due from those same districts was £18,000. This inevitably meant that in lands devoid of income-producing activities home and village life was broken up by the absenteeism of the men, or the gaols were flooded with tax-defaulters. And when they migrated, what did they find ? The Capetown report previously quoted gives the information that in Central Capetown, one area, with a population of 45,000, 91% of them non-Europeans, had more than half that number living in single rooms, while in the suburbs there were 6,000 premises from which sewage had to be removed by men and wagons from pail closets. And that in heat which can be tropical !

The majority of the houses inhabited by certain Africans employed by European mining companies are provided and owned by the employers, for these are the only people who find it profitable to build them ; this provision, as well as that of rations, is a legal obligation, but it has made these companies the final arbiter of the destinies of their employees, since the Government has, almost by default, allowed both local government and social services in the compounds to be run by, and therefore in the interests of, the companies, who thus control to a large extent their employees' activities both in and out of working hours. Further-

more, it restricts the African should he wish to change his occupation or the employing firm, as a change of work means giving up his residence and securing a home in one of the locations, many of which, both in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia, are too small for the numbers who wish to live in them. In many areas the character of the accommodation provided in compounds is quite unsuitable, for it is based on the assumption, now decreasingly valid, that the African is a migrant labourer who is not expected to bring his wife with him when he accepts employment,<sup>1</sup> and even if he does, not to have children or visitors. The majority of "houses" are single-roomed, sometimes with a kitchen, and thus visitors have to sleep in the same room as the man and wife, while children have to be content with sleeping in the open-air, a habit which the African dislikes. In West Africa the "range" type is only too common—a row of twelve rooms, built of concrete, with a corrugated-iron roof, the dimensions often only 10 ft. by 12 ft., and 8 ft. high, of unattractive appearance, and provided at the side with latrines of the pit or bucket system. There is no individual, but a communal kitchen, naturally a continual source of trouble, and offering no suitable place for the storage of foodstuffs under hygienic conditions, while the defective system of ventilation leads to the spread of disease, especially tuberculosis.<sup>2</sup>

It is just over one hundred years ago that the first medical officer of health was appointed in any English city, and since that time organized public health and medical treatment has progressed to an astonishing degree in the municipalities of Western Europe. Perhaps the most advanced communities in this respect are to be found in Scandinavia: Oslo, with a population of about 275,000, has at least fifteen hospitals caring for its sick, with 7300 beds controlled by the municipality, as well as many more in private hospitals and clinics on which it has a claim should occasion arise. Maternity services are especially well organized, under municipal care, so that we may take the example of Gothenberg, where 80% of births take place in the municipal hospitals, in which mothers are cared for at an average charge of one shilling per day. No such facilities exist—or if they exist, on a scale so vastly reduced as hardly to touch the fringe of the problem—for the majority of the coloured inhabitants of the dependent

<sup>1</sup> In 1930, out of 200,000 native labourers on the Rand, 1,474 occupied married quarters. Government opposition to the creation of a permanent industrial population prohibited any increase in this number (*Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, pp. 187-8).

<sup>2</sup> *Economics of Detribalization in North Rhodesia*, Wilson, pp. 22-3; *Labour Conditions in West Africa*, Cd. 6277, pp. 18-19.

Empire, either of Great Britain or any European Power, or of India. In the West Indies certain attempts have been made, but they stand or fall according to the ability and strength of purpose of the medical officer for the district, whose rulers are not always enlightened enough to understand that low rates are not necessarily synonymous with efficient local government. Macmillan,<sup>1</sup> in discussing the health problems of the West Indies, deals energetically with these points, and his remarks are reinforced by the recent West Indies report, which strongly urges the unification of medical services and the co-ordination of other health activities, and goes on to make suggestions on points of policy and organization which have long been accepted as essentials by most civilized communities—and in many ways the West Indies are relatively advanced, though in Barbados there is but one District Nurse, appointed in 1939! What can one make of the example quoted by Macmillan, where one medical officer in Africa has the care of a population of 500,000?

The problem of health is of such fundamental importance that it is worth while looking at its vastness, and at the pitifully inadequate means that are provided to solve it. In Kenya there are 498 hospital beds for a native population of 3 millions, in N. Rhodesia (1,366,000) there are 12 Government native hospitals, treating 11,000 patients every year, and in the Gold Coast (3½ millions) 1049 hospital beds and 123 cots.<sup>2</sup> In India certain illuminating figures exist for the province of Bengal—the maternal mortality rate for India as a whole, on the most conservative estimate,<sup>3</sup> is six or seven times as great as in England: the expectation of life at birth is 26·5 years, compared with 61 here. In Bengal<sup>4</sup> in 1927–8 120,000 people died of cholera, 350,000 of malaria, 350,000 of tuberculosis—there was in 1935–6 one rural dispensary for every 103 square miles, in addition to 6,067 hospital beds; 1,500 beds were allotted to tubercular patients—compare that with the number who die from the disease. Of the cost required for maintaining these hospitals and dispensaries, the Government granted 10·81% in 1935, a decrease of 2·4% on the amount for the previous year; the rest has to be found by voluntary subscriptions or local funds. Public health expenditure per head of the population in Bengal was 20 rupees

<sup>1</sup> *Warring from the West Indies*, Macmillan, pp. 106 ff. For parts of Africa, see *Soviet Light on the Colonies*, Barnes, pp. 198 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Plan for Africa*, pp. 102, 181.

<sup>3</sup> Average for British India, 24·5 (Bengal, 49·2) per 1,000. *Social Service in India* (ed. Blunt), p. 215. For England and Wales, 3·26 (Ministry of Health).

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Director of the Public Health Department, Government of Bengal, 1927–8.



(say 30s.), or 5.7% of the total Budget. Police services claimed 12.1%. Throughout British India the number of hospitals was 1 to 40,185 of the population, less than one-twelfth<sup>1</sup> the provision in the Soviet Union<sup>2</sup>—the number of doctors graduating in India was 630 in 1936; while in the whole of the Punjab there were only six nurses.<sup>3</sup>

Now, it is not only in food, housing and medical treatment that the white man, at his more civilized, demands certain standards, but also in cultural and domestic life. He is coming slowly to realize the advantages of education, not only because it gives him and his children a fuller and richer appreciation of the world—that comes perhaps second in his thoughts—but because it offers the prospect of improvement in his economic position, and also because it keeps his children during their growing years away from work which is likely to injure them physically and in its effect stunt them intellectually. It offers them protection as they begin to find their feet in a world which even for the child and young adolescent in Europe has many a pitfall. We will postpone to a later chapter a fuller consideration of this all-important subject; here let one fact suffice to show how miserable and abject a standard in education is allowed to the native of Kenya, so far as can be measured by money, compared with that of his white master. In May, 1939, the Secretary for the Colonies stated that the amount spent per head on European children's education there amounted, in 1937, to £18 12s.; for African children the figure was 14s. 3d., of which 20% was derived from direct taxation of the Africans. The Government expenditure on each African child in the High Commission Territories varied from 1s. 7d. to 2s. 8d. (1942-3).

But the noblest of ideals for children are but a bitter mockery if there are no healthy mothers to bear and rear them. Just over 100 years ago, a Royal Commission "found many hideous evils arising from the employment of women and girls underground. In some of the coal mines women were literally employed as beasts of burden. Where the seam of coal was too narrow for them to stand upright, they had to crawl backward and forward on all fours for fourteen or sixteen hours a day, dragging the trucks laden with coal. The trucks were generally fastened to a chain which passed between the legs of the unfortunate women, and was then connected with a belt which was strapped round their naked

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of India*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *India Today*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> 6,700 hospitals, 69,300 beds (*Social Service in India*, ed. Blunt, p. 194). In Assam, public health expenditure was not more than 3%.

waists. Their only clothing often consisted of an old pair of trousers made of sacking, and they were uncovered from the waist up—uncovered, that is to say, except for the grime and filth that collected and clotted around them." Such were the conditions that Lord Shaftesbury found in England before 1842—the England of the Industrial Revolution—small wonder that it was also the England of the Chartist era.

We may say that all this happened 100 years ago, but it would not be hard to find conditions of an almost parallel hideousness in the factories of India, and still easier to find a set of conditions which, while not similar, impose upon the women of black tribes a burden almost as great. We have glanced at the maternal mortality of India—the patent result of under-nourishment, bad housing, overstraining work and inadequate ante- and post-natal care. In that country there are 600 centres concerned in maternity and child-welfare work, mainly in urban areas; in England and Wales, with a population of about one-tenth that of India there are five times as many. But no amount of maternity work could hope to deal with the problems which the employment of women in certain types of labour creates, for women form 13.7% of the factory population. In 1928 there were 28,408 women employed underground, particularly in mica mines, nearly one-third of the labour force below the surface,<sup>1</sup> and in a League of Nations report of that year evidence was forthcoming that in Bengal a woman in such employment might have to carry a load of 60 to 80 lbs. 200 yards up a steep incline. The following year the Chief Inspector of Mines in that province reported that girls of 12, 13 and 14 were among the 47 women killed. Since that time the employment of women below ground has practically ceased, only to be permitted again in 1943, nominally for 6 months owing to a fall in output; but this cessation is only one step towards reforms the need for which Mr. H. Butler of the International Labour Organization summarized, in 1935, in the following words: "There is no limitation of hours in shops, docks, buildings. Even the health, safety and child-labour provisions of the Factory Acts do not apply in vast numbers of workshops."

One further condition which the white industrial worker has long demanded and is now slowly gaining is reasonable leisure, for recreation and holidays, resulting from a decrease in his working hours, but the black worker has none or few of these means to lighten his load. Conditions vary tremendously; South African Bantu working in the mines have, on the whole, a happier time

<sup>1</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 293.

than the Hindu employed in similar concerns.<sup>1</sup> There is, on the Rand, a much greater degree of control, both of working hours—fixed at eight per day—and of the conditions under which the men work, while far greater efforts have been made in the compounds to provide amenities, or even the faint beginnings of a social life, among the hundreds of thousands attracted to the mines, though these are more frequently provided by welfare associations and missions. But the existence thus led is highly artificial and unnatural, for it is deprived of a sound healthy basis such as can be provided by family or tribal life. Consequently, while there is often leisure, there is not really enough to occupy that free time in ways which could build up a healthy social atmosphere. The system of passes which has been adopted in the Union restricts movement even on free days—the European libraries are, of course, forbidden ground to the Bantu,<sup>2</sup> who, even if able to read, cannot afford to buy the books to which he has no other access. As a result his leisure is spent in ways which can rapidly deteriorate into a round of gambling and secret drinking, accompanied by a steady decline in the good manners which are one of the natural heritages of the Bantu.

In India the problem is different—here it is the inordinate length of working hours which drugs life more effectively than any narcotic. For ten to twelve hours a day children work in cigarette factories, day in, day out, from the age of five or six, for twopence a day,<sup>3</sup> with no free time, no regular recess and no weekly day of rest; the Factory Acts which control organized industry touch only a fraction of the industrial population, approximately three of the estimated twenty-six millions, and they allow a working week of sixty hours<sup>4</sup> with a maximum of eleven per day, restricting that number to fifty-four for miners who work below ground, and prohibiting the employment of children under thirteen.<sup>5</sup> In Northern Rhodesia's copper mines "the ticket system of thirty shifts permits no weekly rest day and no special rates for week-end labour".

These instances will serve to show how great is the disparity

<sup>1</sup> "The Rand mines have done more for the workers than any other South African employers" (Macmillan, *Africa Emergent*, p. 254).

<sup>2</sup> See page 71 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Industrial Worker in India*, Shiva Rao; *Social Service in India*, p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> *The White Sahibs in India*, Reynolds, pp. 173, 239. In Barbados bakers (1938) had a working week of up to eighty-five hours and even longer. *Cd.* 6070, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> An attempt is now being made in Bombay, Poona, Sholapur, Hubli and Ahmedabad, as well as Karachi, by Shops and Establishments Acts, 1940, to limit working hours, fix closing times, prohibit employment of children under twelve and to provide a week's annual holiday with pay.

between the standards which the white man regards as his right, and those which he is content to allow the black African or brown Hindu to endure, but they hardly explain how or why this double standard arose or is still maintained. Let us come back to the point from which we started. Fear! The white man, in Western Europe, has succeeded in building some sort of civilization which he hopes will realize his longings, especially on the material plane. He sees an imposing façade to a building, somewhat battered at the moment by high-explosive bombs, but nevertheless one which he believes capable of being restored, redecorated and soon, he hopes, once again made habitable; his own energy and initiative have erected and furnished it, and he intends to keep it for himself. There is presented to him, through the agency of interested parties, a haunting fear that those to whom he has taught the secret of his own craft, its methods and technique, will use the knowledge which he himself has imparted to them, to displace him, eject him by force of superior numbers, aided by his own weapons, from his possessions. Till now he has appeared to hold the monopoly of skill both in designing and carrying out his designs, and he bitterly resents the possibility that rivals, some inferior, so he believes, in intelligence and skill, others patient, efficient, but diabolically cunning, will oust him . . . and his fear makes him blind and cruel.

Now, the fear which breeds such terrible consequences is, I believe, largely implanted in the minds of the working-class population, in South Africa, in the United States and in this country, by those who have gained financially by the abject standard of living to which natives are generally condemned and who have most to lose financially by the apportionment of a larger share of their profits to the "wage-fund" of those who mainly produce this wealth; or to put it in a more modern and scientific way, the difference between the values which the natives produce in all the various operations of their labour, and that which they receive in return for their exertions in the form of wages, is so enormous that the controllers of capital and the exploiters of labour will go to any lengths to retain, as their personal perquisite, this difference, and the fear is so subtly implanted and nurtured that the white worker eventually fails to recognize that, by tolerating—or even encouraging—a low standard of life and wages for coloured peoples, he is likely to forge a weapon which at need can be turned against himself—against his own standards and his own wages.

Let us look for a moment at some of the profits which are being made in countries where the mass of labour power is drawn from a coloured population.

Perhaps the most important and powerful corporation in the mining area of South Africa is a holding company, "Rand Mines, Ltd."<sup>1</sup> Over a period of forty-one years the shareholders have received in dividends £22,200,786—a return of 4,465% on their original investments, with another £700,000 thrown in as bonus; the average dividend for that period has worked out at 112.55%—for four years in succession (1910–13) the company paid 220%; in 1921 the dividend fell to the catastrophically low figure of 70%; today (returns for 1940) shareholders are content with a return of 160%. This, of course, is a princely figure compared with the beggarly 25% which West Rand Consolidated can offer; but here, too, there may be better things in store, for the profits of 1939, £511,383, jumped in 1940 to £1,954,413.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the total working profits of the Rand Gold mines in March 1941 reached the huge sum of £3,897,732: in August 1942, £3,659,518.

Farther north, in Northern Rhodesia, there has been developed in the past sixteen years a rich, profitable and easily-worked belt of copper and cobalt. After slumping in 1930 from £72 a ton to £27 in 1931, between 1935 and 1937 the price of copper swung back again to £70, with the result that in 1938 the mining companies of this area received from the sale of the produce of their mines £8,201,000. Of this sum approximately six times as much was paid in dividends to shareholders (exclusive of royalties and other expenses) as went to the natives whose toil had so largely dug the metal from the earth: £3,100,000 in dividends, £500,000 in native wages. In 1935 one mine paid 62% on its ordinary shares, together with a bonus. It is small wonder that there have been disturbances, first in 1935 against a revised assessment of taxation, which produced 150,000 defaulters throughout the Colony, which has a population of about 1,400,000, and recently in 1940, when workers, now numbering 24,000, demanded an increase of wages, which varied from 9d. to 1s. 2d. a day, while the average wage of the white miner was 28s. 6d. Similarly in the Gold Coast mines, the average wage for native labourers is £29 4s. per annum, while for Europeans it is £65 6s. 15s.<sup>3</sup>

In the Gold Coast the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation has been able to earn for its shareholders profits almost as large as those of the biggest Rand companies—concessions have been secured from native chiefs at rentals which are ludicrously low, from about £60 to £200 per annum, without any provision for royalties by which

<sup>1</sup> *Randlords*, P. H. Emden, 1935, appendix.

<sup>2</sup> *Times* Report, April 22nd, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> Cd. 6277, pp. 87, 111. Like figures hold good for Nigeria (£662).

the population could be benefited, and without any control by the colonial Government. As a result of these undoubted commercial assets, this company has been able to pay not less than 70% (together with 20% cash bonus) and 100% with bonus and 95% in 1932-33, 80% in 1940-41 and the following year; in 1929-30 100% with bonus, and 95% in 1936-37. Another concern, Consolidated African Selection Trust, Ltd., reached the nadir of its fortunes when in 1931-32 it could pay only 20%, its zenith in 1936-37, with 90% (free of tax) and a share bonus of 150%.<sup>1</sup> In Trinidad the larger oil companies showed equally good returns: five of these control 88% of the output. Four of them, with a total capital of £6,770,000, earned in 1936-37 profits of £1,540,000; the wages paid by the whole industry were, at £473,000, approximately a third of this sum; dividends were between 30% and 45%.<sup>2</sup>

It is a fairly prevalent idea that the cane-sugar industry of the West Indies, after enjoying in the 18th century a bloated and immoral prosperity, received a series of body blows in the 19th from which it never really recovered; Messrs. Tate and Lyle, however, can tell another story. In April, 1940, this combine, which controls 57% of Britain's total sugar consumption, announced a share bonus of 40% in addition to a final dividend of 14%, making 18% for the year, a rate they had yearly maintained since their last bonus distribution in 1934-35, while a kindred firm which manufactured brewing sugar could afford 15% on ordinary and 79·8% on deferred shares. In May, 1939, the West Indies Sugar Company, a subsidiary concern of Tate and Lyle, offered<sup>3</sup> a single scholarship to a Jamaica student to enable him to study at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad, with the offer of employment. This munificent gesture doubled the facilities already available for West Indies students in this particular line of research. Is it too much to hope that people will perceive some relation between the exploitation which these profits reveal and the background of extreme poverty, bad social conditions, scandalous housing, starved health services, feeble education and rampant illegitimacy which is the direful picture revealed—or at least partly exposed—by those extracts from the report of the Royal Commission which the Government has allowed to be published? Perhaps the full story would be too painful—or too damaging—for even our hardened consciences.

Outrageous though these profits are, they dwindle into insignificance.

<sup>1</sup> *Plan for Africa*, pp. 135-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Labour in the West Indies*, Lewis, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 3rd, 1939.

nificance compared with those which for many decades have been wrung from the native working population of India. In 1837 a writer, English by birth, and aristocratic in social "climate", stated<sup>1</sup> quite bluntly, "The fundamental principle of the English has been to make the whole Indian nation subservient in every possible way to the interests and benefits of themselves. They have been taxed to the utmost limit." Nowadays it is not that Indians are taxed so much on the financial resources which they are supposed to possess, though the average 8%<sup>2</sup> on annual income is a far more serious burden than the figure would suggest, but that the very last ounce of energy is drained from them in an entirely soulless attempt to increase the profits from production by reducing wages to a pittance and straining working hours to the limit. Naturally the profits on capital invested go to the country whence the capital first came—they rarely remain where they were gained. The *Financial Times* and the British Associated Chamber of Commerce estimate that anything up to £1,000,000,000 of British-owned money is invested in Government sterling debt, railway debt, War Loan, public companies registered inside and outside India, and in private companies and enterprises. Taking 5% as an average interest, one can see that each year India—or, to put it more concretely, the labour of Indian brains and hands—pours into Britain an annual tribute of £50 million. The gilded days of the nabobs would appear at first sight to have vanished at the close of the 18th century; no longer would it seem possible for the servants of the Company, paid a comparatively small salary, to retire with a handsome fortune, but these leeches have their successors who draw sums, perhaps not so startlingly large but obtained by means not radically different in kind, from investments in jute, cotton, tea and coal. The report of the Indian Tariff Board, 1927, gave figures to show that Bombay mills, especially of cotton, where the operatives are some of the most poorly-paid workers of the world, paid dividends of anything<sup>3</sup> between 40% and 200% in 1920, while in 1921 no fewer than eleven returned 100%. Ten years later, when the economic crisis was really pointing out the indivisibility of the scheme of things, some jute and tea concerns were able to declare a dividend of 50%; the Marikuppam gold mines averaged 33% for fifty years, while coal in one case rewarded investors with 150% and in two cases 85%. Brailsford<sup>4</sup> summarizes the position quite succinctly when he shows that for every £100 in profits from mills,

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on Indian Affairs*, Shore, 1837, ap. "White Sahibs", p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Problem of India*, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> "White Sahibs", p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Rebel India*, p. 145.

£12 were paid in wages—an even greater disparity than in the Northern Rhodesia copper mines.

Truly these are “glittering prizes” to be won in economic warfare! Small wonder is it that the *Mining World and Engineering Record* in September, 1936, discussing certain legislation in Mexico which aimed at stopping exorbitant profits, gave the following advice: “With all these meddlesome legislators the world over, the activities of the British capitalist are becoming more limited. . . . He will adhere to the good mining shares of the Rand, India and other centres” (that is, where political control is organized in the interests of his own class).<sup>1</sup> President Taft expressed the same sentiment when he said, “While our foreign policy should not be turned a hair’s breadth from the straight path of justice, it may well be made to include active intervention to secure for our merchandise and our capitalists opportunity for profitable investment.”<sup>2</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE

#### TO WHOSE ADVANTAGE?

“Thieves at home must hang; but he that puts  
Into his overgorged and bloated purse  
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.”

COWPER: *Task*, I, 736.

How is it done? Are we to believe those who, like the lion-tamer in a fifth-rate circus, tell us that it is all done by kindness—and when we see the toiling millions, will it satisfy us when informed that they really like it, as the fox, so the sportsmen are fond of declaring, in his heart of hearts, loves to lead the hounds a chase over miles of the English shires? Somehow it doesn’t sound convincing, nor are we yet quite sure of the altruism or the benevolence of the capitalist whose charity is rewarded by a return of 160%. A glance at a few figures will show us that the first and most obvious way to reach such dividends is to pay your work-people wages which barely keep them from starvation.

Let us look at the rates paid to workers in these countries from which we have seen such ample returns accrue to the owner, or manipulator, of capital. A report on the payment of the natives employed on the Witwatersrand by the Director of Native Labour in 1933 showed that very few of them were drawing less than 2s.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from “White Sahibs”, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Man’s Worldly Goods*, Huberman, p. 265.



per working day, but in addition free rations and quarters were provided by the mining companies in their compounds.<sup>1</sup> This figure places the Bantu in the Union at the head of the wages list, and its glaring contrast with the rates which obtain elsewhere in South Africa is partly an explanation of the sinister processions which wend their way from the north to Johannesburg, where the streets are as paved with gold for the native as were the streets of London to those who dwell in a simpler and less sophisticated age; and only too often the gold proves to be the thinnest washing of gilt over a core of much baser metal. By offering wages which are, by comparison, high, the mines secure a fairly adequate labour supply, though this is only one of several very potent reasons why there is such a trend to the urban areas; the native, however, has to pay his poll tax, he finds the necessities of life, apart from his food, dear—there is, for example, a 25% tax on all imported blankets used as clothing. This forces him to abandon his own forms of dress for entirely unsuitable European garments which he must purchase on the spot. There is a poll tax of £1 per annum, but the very fact that 63,000 are yearly prosecuted under the 1925 Native Taxation and Development Act suggests that even that sum is far beyond the reasonable capacity of the mine Bantu to pay.

There is thus good reason to believe that the Rand native is not so fortunate financially as would appear. What are we to say about conditions elsewhere, *e.g.*, in the South African wine districts? In a London newspaper of September 3rd, 1938, the British United Press reported that in the districts of Paarl, Worcester, Malmesbury and Wellington, part of the wages due to coloured labourers was being paid in bottles of wine, owing to bumper crops, accumulation of stocks and loss of overseas markets. It was even stated that only one-third of the wages due was paid in cash, the rest in that particular form of kind. The result can be imagined; a partiality for strong drink is one of the weaknesses of the Bantu character, and here was a case where this weakness was deliberately exploited. Generally speaking, and for obvious reasons, agricultural wages are a good deal lower than industrial; thus in Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Rhodesia,<sup>2</sup> on the farms and tobacco plantations, there is a range of anything from 5s. to 10s. *a month*;

<sup>1</sup> Average wage per shift: 1902, 1s. 1.9d.; 1906, 1s. 10.3d.; 1910, 1s. 9.6d.; 1914, 1s. 11.7d.; 1921, 2s. 2.1d.; 1930, 2s. 1.7d.; 1939, 2s. 3d. Food and quarters estimated to cost 1s. 1d. per shift worked (*Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, pp. 206-7).

<sup>2</sup> "The conditions under which agricultural labour is employed in Northern Rhodesia are in my opinion generally unsatisfactory in respect of wages, sanitation, rations and medical care" (*Director of Medical Services, Report*, 1941).

occasionally the figure may rise to the staggering height of 20s., but such remuneration is rare, and never consistently paid.

Kenya is probably as black a spot as one could find, both as regards wages and the labour regulations in force. Work in the gold mines receives as little as 11s. 6d. a month; many natives spend half the year in such employment, to enable them to earn enough cash to pay the Government tax of 30s. a year, and to have, if possible, some small store of money to make good the deficiencies in products grown on their small plot of ground, which averages from three to four acres. When the African himself cannot earn enough for these purposes he has to turn his children out; Ordinance 193 of 1937 stated that "the father or . . . guardian of a native child . . . may, if such child is above the age of TEN YEARS . . . *with the consent of such child*, apprentice him . . . for any term not exceeding *five years*". Suggestions were made that this age should be raised to twelve, and for industrial employment fourteen. What did the children do? First, they might be sent as far as 500 miles from their homes, without adequate supervision, and especially liable to fall victims to vice and drunkenness. A Government Committee reluctantly agreed that "drinking did occur . . . but did not merit the term scandalous"—this is among children of twelve! Then on perhaps a sisal farm they would earn anything from 1½d. to 3d. a day, and then, if not exhausted by seven or eight hours toil, they might work overtime, with piece-work extra. 95% of these children are in agricultural work; the other 5% are employed in mines, very often alluvial gold-mining, where their reward is from 8s. to 12s. a month, and they do get some additional protection from workmen's compensation legislation, the operations of which are confined to mining. Even officialdom admitted that "the only reason for employment of juveniles is that such labour is cheap". We are apt to pour scorn upon the labour legislation of other countries, but we ought to remind ourselves that the minimum age for such employment in French Colonies is usually fourteen, in Portuguese fourteen, and in Spanish (from 1906) fifteen; in Barbados it has only recently been raised from twelve to fourteen, in British Honduras it remains at twelve.

Conditions in Kenya have not been improved by the outbreak of war, which has resulted in the postponement of any amelioration which might otherwise have been possible, had the market for both sisal and coffee been stronger. Rehousing has been found impracticable; a drought in 1940 increased the difficulties, while it was reported that there was some renewal of the abuses connected with the recruitment of labour, particularly by way of giving unduly large advances of wages to secure recruits. Pyre-

thrum, almost alone, remained profitable, and in this industry, which was run on family lines, wages of from 30s. to 35s. a month were earned. But the most interesting point brought out by the *International Labour Review* (March 1941) was the growth in the number of strikes: "Natives are becoming more and more strike-minded every year as they realize what a powerful weapon a strike can be. The African is progressing rapidly, and patient and sympathetic investigation into his complaints and grievances and prompt remedies where necessary will do much to maintain good relations between masters and servant. Many employers are apt to dismiss curtly isolated complaints, and even complaints from a small deputation, and a strike results." Is this a cloud no bigger than a man's hand destined to develop into a tropical storm?

The Rhodesian copper mines, which in 1936 exported 141,000 tons, have recently made enormous profits, as we previously saw; their average dividends are about 45%. Compare that with the wages of the African labourer. In 1937, on the surface, he received 18s. a month, in 1940<sup>1</sup> 19s., rising in 1941 to 22s. 6d.; if he worked below ground 32s., increased to 36s. In 1941 this latter figure was 30s.; the wage bill of 17,000 native employees came to £244,000, that of 1,690 Europeans with salaries ranging from £40 to £70 a month, £800,000—that is, one-tenth of the number received more than three times as much! Again, can we be surprised that this copper belt was the scene recently of much rioting and a good deal of bloodshed? The Bantu have no particular liking for work in the mines, to which they are driven by pressure of hard economic facts as well as the existence of a poll-tax to be paid in money—a symptom of the mind which regards all Africans as "bone-lazy" and in the past enforced a money economy to make them work. Once used to mine-labour, even if not occupied on it the whole year, it is difficult for the native to do without the money it brings in, even though there has been a tendency for this to decrease, as the following figures show.<sup>2</sup>

*Average Wage per Month*

	1932	1937
* Gold mines . . . . .	24s. 6d.	20s. 9d.
Asbestos . . . . .	27s. 8d.	23s. 1d.
Chrome . . . . .	23s. 7d.	21s. 4d.
Coal . . . . .	49s. 8d.	49s. 0d.
All mines average . . . . .	25s. 11d.	22s. 0d.

On the Gold Coast between 1936 and 1938, 37,500 native labourers were employed at an average rate of 1s. 5d. per day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pim Report*, 1938; *The Colour Bar in the Copper Belt*, Lewin, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *The Southern Bantu*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Plan for Africa*, p. 138.

Macmillan's *Warning from the West Indies*<sup>1</sup> gives us a picture of the labouring conditions there, and the figures for wages are drawn from that book. We find some variation according to the islands and also the type of work done, while some relief is given by the crops which the workers can grow on the small plots round their cabins. The average is about 1s. 2d. to 1s. 8d. a day,<sup>2</sup> though occasionally, as in Jamaica, as much as 2s. 6d. may be earned; in one or two of the groups the minimum falls to 9d. At first sight this seems a good deal better than what the Bantu gets, but generally speaking mine work is much more regular, and is, of course, generally accompanied by the provision of rations and quarters, while the West Indian, if he is lucky, can rely on only 200 days work in the year.<sup>3</sup> Further, he has to face the competition of female labour, which is usually paid at half these rates,<sup>4</sup> and so, on the well-known principle, is preferred where possible.

A recent investigation conducted by the Jamaica Labour Board during the height of the seasonal employment in the cane-fields showed that an average family of 3.87 persons earned in all 23s. 1½d., or for each person a little less than 6s. per week. A further examination of the household budgets of 312 families revealed that each family consumed each week an average of one pennyworth of butter, 10¼d. of condensed milk (fresh milk is too expensive and is never used), 10¼d. of bread, 1s. 9½d. of fresh meat—totalling, when all items are considered, 12s. 9d., or about 2d. per person per meal.<sup>5</sup> Taking the cost of living as 100 in September 1939, it has increased steadily from 115 in January 1940 to 141 in June 1941, though wage-rates have remained substantially the same.<sup>6</sup> In Trinidad there has been a similar rise in the cost of living (38%), but the sugar combines claim that their increases have nearly met it. For the moment work on the American bases absorbs nearly 20,000 labourers, at \$1.17 a day—a considerable attraction when sugar-plantation labourers get 95 cents, and cocoa labourers from 60 cents to 80 cents, according to time- or piece-rates.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the American Government, which imported about 16,000 workers to the States, guaranteed them employment for at least 75% of their working days.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also *Labour Conditions in the West Indies*, Cd. 6070.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070 gives fuller details for each of the islands, covering most trades and occupations, emphasizing the intermittent nature of most employment.

<sup>3</sup> *Warning from the West Indies*, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 97. Jamaica, Public Works Dept. unskilled labour, male 3s. 1d. per day, female 1s. 5d.

<sup>5</sup> *Public Opinion*, Jamaica, December 6th, 1941.

<sup>6</sup> *Jamaica Labour Department Report*, 1940.

<sup>7</sup> *Economist*, July 4th, 1942.

<sup>8</sup> *Anglo-American Caribbean Commission*, 1943, p. 20.

In Antigua, by a hard day's work 20 cents may be earned by clearing an acre of sugar. Since rents average 48 cents a week, there is not a great deal over—a marriage licence (in St. Kitts) costs 96 cents. It is not surprising that housing is poor, while in many places a formal marriage tie is non-existent.

In dealing with a sub-continent like India, it is impossible to give figures which will illustrate every variety of occupation or make allowance for a bewildering difference of conditions; certain official estimates, however, do exist which will sharpen the contrast between the national income of India and that of other countries. These average figures include *all* incomes, even the highest, and so can give only a vague idea of the real facts. They are difficult to compare with complete accuracy, owing to the changes in price level, but they, and some figures for the United Kingdom and the United States, can be quoted to illustrate a certain sinister tendency.<sup>1</sup> In 1882, Baring and Burger estimated the national income per head at £2 5s.; in 1911, Findlay Shirras at £3 5s.; in 1921, the Simon Commission at £7 10s.; in 1937, Grigg at £4 4s.; in 1941 (August 6th) an estimate in the *Times*<sup>2</sup> gave the national income as approximately £3 15s. For the United Kingdom, the Simon Commission put the figure at £95, which is considerably higher than other estimates—£82, or £79 exclusive of national debt<sup>3</sup> interest and pensions. The corresponding figure for the United States is £153. It will thus be seen that, whatever the estimate, the Indian worker must be living at a completely inadequate level: no one has yet soberly suggested that he can live on one-twentieth of the average income of an Englishman.

In April 1939,<sup>4</sup> certain calculations in the *Times Trade Supplement* produced the result that out of a population of approximately 400,000,000, 35,600,000 enjoyed an average annual income of £15 or over, while the whole of the rest of the inhabitants were below that figure. There are, of course, similar disparities in our country. One-tenth of the whole working population have incomes from all sources of over £250 a year. This one-tenth receive just less than one-half of the total of personal incomes, so that the other nine-tenths have only one-half to share among them; and of those who possess incomes of less than £250—i.e., approximately 15,520,000<sup>5</sup>—at least 10,600,000 fall below the £125 level. The statistics of the distribution of capital show a

<sup>1</sup> *India Today*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> It also gave comparative figures: India: population 400,000,000 app.—income £1,500,000,000. Gt. Britain: population 46,600,000 app.—income between £6 and £7,000,000,000.

<sup>3</sup> Pigou and Clark, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> *India Today*, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *The Condition of Britain*, Cole.

similar unevenness. Between 1924<sup>1</sup> and 1930 the owners of capital of less than £100 were 78.6% of the total number, and their proportion was 6.4%; while the owners of over £100,000 were 0.04%, with 23.2% under their control. The condition of India is thus an extreme case of a maldistribution which is also found in England and Wales.

The exiguous national income of Indians can better be appreciated if we look at some figures for the actual remuneration of workers, particularly in industry. The highest-paid workers are probably to be found in the Ahmedabad district of Bombay, where cotton-weavers may earn as much as £1 weekly, though spinners fall to 12s. 6d.; but in the Central Provinces the same sort of work may get only 5s. or 3s. 9d., while women and children are paid at a lower rate. Jute-weavers' wages vary from 9s. 3d. to 12s., occasionally more; but, even so, taking all in all, in the best-paid centres of industry those at the top<sup>2</sup> receive about 2s. per day, while those at the bottom are rewarded with 8d. or 9d.

Next come those engaged in engineering industries. According to the *India Year-book* (1939-40), the average wages of fitters, riveters and blacksmiths varied from 13s. 6d. to 18s. and 15s. for the first two trades, while on the railways, where the employees totalled 636,000, the average weekly rate for all of them was less than 15s. This is a princely sum compared with the wages of miners, who in India, as elsewhere, seem to be the "unfortunates" of industry. In some parts they are paid as much as 1s. 3d. per day, but more frequently the skilled worker receives 5s. a week, the unskilled 3s. 9d., while when women were employed they were rewarded with 2s. 9d. The mica mines paid their workers even less, and until the labour of women below ground was prohibited their standard rate of pay was 1s. 10d. These figures are not, of course, absolutely static—they show occasional rises, more frequent falls, while price levels also vary, usually downward—but since 75% of the population is dependent on agriculture, the smaller return for commodities grown on the land very severely hits the much greater number who draw their ghost of a livelihood from the soil. It is, however, probably in the tea-gardens that the nadir is reached; in Assam, working under contract terms which can be made iniquitous, men receive 2s. 6d. to 2s. 8d. weekly, women 1s. 9d. to 2s., while children, without protection in the matter of hours of labour, get 1s. 1d. to 1s. 5½d. In the neighbouring Surma valley wages are not quite so high!<sup>3</sup> It is said that in Southern India they are even lower.

<sup>1</sup> *The Social Structure of England and Wales*, Carr Saunders and Caradog Jones.

<sup>2</sup> *The Problem of India*, Shelvankar, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Report summarized in *Manchester Guardian*, January 9th, 1943.

That indeed is hard to bear, but it is not yet the end of the shackles which are riveted upon the most defenceless class. The Royal Commission on Labour in 1929 drew official attention to the scandalous way in which wages were often paid five to six weeks after they were earned, so that the worker coming into a job was immediately thrown into debt, and at once victimized by the money-lenders, whose connections with the employing firms were sometimes almost blatant. This incubus also made it more difficult for the worker to transfer his labour to another employer, as he ran the risk of losing what he had so strenuously worked for. It was then officially stated that two-thirds were in debt, often for three months wages at exorbitant rates of interest.<sup>1</sup> In 1936 an effort was made, by the Payment of Wages Act, to restrain the abuses of this evil system, by fixing a maximum wage period of one month, with payment within one week of the month, as well as limiting the arbitrary imposition of fines or curtailment of wages; but it will take more than a legislative enactment, often insufficiently enforced, to abolish the abuse of centuries.

Now, when wage rates are as low as the figures quoted above, and when profits are as high as we have seen them to be, it is obviously to the interests of the beneficiaries of the *status quo* to keep things in this happy state as long as possible. The same somewhat obvious thought occurred to the mill-owners of England a century ago, when they used every device in their power to hinder the growth and development of Trade Unions. The same struggle is going on in many quarters where an economically and politically dominant white race batters on a coloured population. It is sometimes complicated by difficult questions of colour, as in South Africa; but so far the general result has been to render it extremely hard, if not almost impossible, for the native to make his voice heard in protest against his exploitation, or even to propose sane and rational measures which will not only benefit himself, but induce a healthier tone into the whole of industrial or agricultural life. The spate of legislation which has flowed from South African Parliaments in the last thirty years has included thirty-five Acts which deal specifically with the natives, and it is safe to say that practically all of them are restrictive, and subject the Bantu to discriminations of every type, political, economic and social. Thus the right to strike is officially withheld; the Riotous Assemblies Act makes it extraordinarily hazardous to advance any proposal, since the Minister for Native Affairs "may close virtually all constitutional channels of action or expression".<sup>2</sup> Even in the native Reserves no gathering of more than ten natives

<sup>1</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> *The Colour Problems of South Africa*, Brookes, p. 12.

may be held without the permission of the chief or headman, as well as the approval of the Native Commissioner. There has been passed a series of Masters and Servants Acts under which a breach of contract is not to be tried as a civil, but as a criminal, offence, with the right of summary arrest added; while the power which the Governor-General has of ordering the removal of any native from one place to another within the Union can be put into operation with devastating force should any Bantu be bold enough to voice his feelings—or, in the language of the Act, “utter any word or do any other act or thing whatever with intent to promote any feeling of hostility between natives and Europeans”. The penalty may be a year’s imprisonment or a fine of £100. In these circumstances there is not much incentive for a native to address his fellow-sufferers! Three important Acts in 1911, 1924 and 1926 seem to envisage an indefinite postponement to the admission of natives to Trades Unions and exclude those of them who have to carry passes from the machinery devised to settle industrial disputes,<sup>1</sup> thus refusing to recognize them as parties to a dispute. The attitude of the Trade Unions to the natives will be considered later.

In spite of all the dangers which inevitably attend any attempt to form organizations on Trade Union lines, certain adventurous souls were not to be deterred, and in the disturbed conditions which followed the war in 1919 a Nyasaland native,<sup>2</sup> Kadalie by name, endeavoured to improve the conditions of his fellow Bantu by building up the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of South Africa. Nyasas are often intelligent and venturesome, education<sup>3</sup> is more widely spread than usual owing to the influence of the early Scottish settlers and missionaries, so that they readily find employment far beyond the boundaries of their own country. Already in 1915, under the leadership of a native preacher named Chilembwe, they had protested against the onerous conditions of labour tenants, with a certain measure of success, due partly to the special circumstances of Nyasaland, which has a European population of only 2,000, “who use high skill in the direction of numerous labourers, and who have more or less identified themselves with Africa”.<sup>4</sup> But Kadalie’s movement was much more important, as it was organized in Natal, where industrial conditions were bad. It succeeded in obtaining some increase of pay for dockside workers before the Government took violent steps to dissolve it—steps which, however, only increased its membership

<sup>1</sup> *The Colour Problems of South Africa*, Brookes, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Negro Revolt*, James, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Africa Emergent*, Macmillan, p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.



and its importance to such an extent that Hertzog himself was reported to have supported it, only to turn against it when he became Prime Minister, with the ferocity to be expected from one whose views on the "native question" were so pronounced. Within seven years, as a result of poor organization, internal dissension and the virulent hostility of the white workers, this Union faded away; but the controlling elements had had their lesson, and from 1926 date the most repressive of the Acts by which South Africa keeps the natives "in their proper places".

The intimidating difficulties which beset those who try to build up a Trade Union were recently experienced by 366 workers in Johannesburg, who suffered arrest and imprisonment for daring, since they were natives, to go on strike, after a particularly shabby bit of juggling by their employers. A minimum wage of £1 7s. 8d. was fixed for certain distributive trades, but excluded coal, dairy and timber, though later coal was put on the list of those occupations to which the award was to apply. Thereupon a new organization was formed by employers whose business it was to distribute coal, so that technically they were carters, and not bound by the Wage Determination Board. This almost precipitated a strike, but the employers yielded an inch by agreeing to an increase to £4 a month, with a promise to grant both a further increase and shorter hours. Having thus slightly withdrawn, they prepared for a further assault by refusing to negotiate with the workers' "union", and in some cases reduced the wages already agreed. In spite of steps by the Minister of Labour to enforce the award, the workers went on strike because of the employers' action, only to be arrested under the Urban Areas Act on the ground that they had disobeyed the lawful commands of their employers. Eighty-five who opted to be tried together were fined £1 or ten days, the remainder choosing separate trials, an inconvenience which did not deter the employers from maintaining their position, even if it meant a long and obstinate struggle—a challenge which the men's organization was prepared to take up until a Senator, acting unofficially, persuaded the different parties to meet, the employers to recognize the organization and the Departments of Labour and Native Affairs to join in a conference which provided for a wage of £4 a month for adults, £2 for juveniles and an increase for those already receiving the new minimum. Perhaps most important of all, the employers recognized the Union in all future negotiations; they had based their previous refusal on the fact that the Government itself did not recognize African Trade Unions, a state of affairs which may shortly be altered. The other great stumbling-block was the use of the criminal law against natives in cases where it would not be

brought into action against other workers (*i.e.*, whites). As a result of this, instructions have been issued that police authorities are not to take action against natives "who refuse to work"—a euphemism for going on strike—until the matter has been referred to the Department of Labour and Native Affairs, so that there may be an opportunity of settling the dispute without calling in the criminal law.<sup>1</sup>

That the South African Government has at last realized the *impasse* into which industry is driven by its attitude to native Trade Unions is proved by the statement made on June 17th, 1942, by the Minister of Labour to the South African Trades and Labour Council, that native Trade Unions (of which there were 415 in the Union and sixteen on the Rand) were to be recognized, with the right of collective bargaining under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Further details have not yet been published, nor is there any indication of the reaction of the white Unions to this really revolutionary decision. Since about 85% of unskilled labour is native, the possibilities of this new development are enormous, and will be watched with intense interest, not only in South Africa, but in the Rhodesias, whose industrial policies have so largely followed the example of the Union. But even these proposed reforms have to wait upon the exigencies of a General Election, for it is notorious that in South Africa, as the date for polling draws near, the Government becomes less and less interested in its native responsibilities and tacitly neglects enlightened proposals, for fear they disturb and alarm the white electorate.

In addition to what might be called the "official" prohibition of anything like a Trade Union, there is also a very wide unofficial dislike of any training being given to natives which might enable them to qualify as members of a craft. A European who offered facilities to a Bantu to become really proficient in the use of machinery would soon, in South Africa, be regarded as a traitor to his class, so that in the mines natives may not do skilled work, and are consequently debarred from the better-paid jobs, regardless of the fact that in Northern Rhodesia<sup>2</sup> they carry out blasting operations, and on one mine even drive lorries, for which they are paid £3 a month—a job for which Europeans on another mine receive £30; in the Belgian Congo they drive the trains. This veto on any advancement in their industrial skill also extends to what we might call "the black-coated" side of African employment. A questioner in the House of Commons (February 23rd, 1938) wished to know why applications for clerk interpre-

<sup>1</sup> For the full story see *Race Relation News*, June, July 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *The Colour Bar in the Copper Belt*, Lewin, p. 7.

terships in Zomba, Nyasaland, were now confined to Europeans, though Africans had been employed for many years past. The answer came that the "rapidly growing work of translating technical, scientific and legal documents and books into local vernaculars . . . requires a higher knowledge of English than is possessed at present by any native of Nyasaland". Presumably the Europeans appointed had a wider knowledge of local vernaculars than any Nyasa.

The tremendous influence which South African native policy, especially in the matter of Trade Unions, wielded over the Copper Belt can well be illustrated by the efforts which European miners and officials, mainly from the Union and Southern Rhodesia, have made to carry with them into Northern Rhodesia their own particular views and to get them enforced. In the first place, Africans there are doing not only semi-skilled, but fully skilled work, some even holding blasting certificates and able to carry out important operations in mining, while the Europeans are chiefly supervisors. Then the resentment of the latter at this encourages them to urge the adoption of South African ideas. Thus the late Secretary of the South African Mine-Workers' Union in 1936 visited Northern Rhodesia and stated its point of view with unmistakable clarity. "He had come to help make Northern Rhodesia a white country. He was surprised to find that the native had actually encroached upon not only unskilled labour, but skilled labour in this territory, and he asked what was going to happen to the white man in this country if they were not organized. . . . In the near future union men only would be employed on the Copper Belt. Sir Hubert Young (the Governor) made it very clear that the Native policy of the Government would not encourage any encroachment by natives into work now performed by Europeans. Mr. Harris added that the South African Mine-Workers' Union, with the support of the railway workers in the territory in the matter of skilled trades, was determined that Downing Street should not have its way. The white man's rights must be protected."<sup>1</sup>

At the moment the Mine-Workers' Union, with its Northern Rhodesia branch, is not strong enough to enforce its policy, though it was one of the points raised in the European strike of 1940; if it did, then of course, as in South Africa, the line of demarcation between skilled and unskilled work would be precisely that of colour. The very facility with which the African picks up the essentials of the work required in the mines makes the problem partly an educational one, for it demonstrates that with good technical training he would reach standards of efficiency which would qualify him for far more important posts, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Colour Bar in the Copper Belt*, Lewis, pp. 5 ff.

correspondingly higher remuneration. Education is, indeed, a paramount necessity, for only so can the subtleties and technique of Trade Unionism be grasped, as well as its pitfalls be realized and avoided. The growing urbanization of the native mining population, one half of whom are permanent in the mining area, and two-thirds of whose children have known no other kind of life, offers the opportunity to build a much more stable community than at present, just as is being done in the Belgian Katanga. The Congo is estimated to have 422,000 wage-earners in a population of over 10,000,000; 55.6% of these are engaged in industry, a number which makes it imperative for the authorities to have some perfectly clear policy for the future.

In the West Indies, while circumstances differ, there is much the same dislike to the formation of native Unions, whose purpose it is to stand up and demand better conditions and higher wages; but recent events focussing attention on the economic plight of the islands, and incidentally leading to the formation of a People's National Party, with its own newspaper, have produced various proposals the very nature of which reveals how bad the state of things was before. The careers of Grant, Cipriani, Butler, Payne and Bustamente alike bear witness to the hazards attending any labour organization, but the underlying discontent was far too dangerous to be ignored, and it is possible that the recent report of the West Indies Commission will bear fruit. But the old leopard doesn't change his spots so easily. Both here and in Sierra Leone the outbreak of war gave the authorities the chance to get some of their own back, for Uriah Butler, who organized the 1937 strike, was arrested, and is reported to have been sent to a small island off Trinidad, while Wallace Johnson, President of the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress, was not only punished with a year's imprisonment for criminal libel in an article published some months before the war, but is to be detained for its duration, under the Colonial Defence Regulations, based on the Emergency Powers Act. A Sedition and an Undesirable Publications Ordinance are also in force, and both restrict freedom of meeting and of speech. The Jamaica Defence Regulations were also employed in June 1941 to arrest Mr. W. A. Domingo, who has been described as "one of the most outstanding and useful of Jamaicans"—an event which has led to the formation of a Jamaica branch of the Council for Civil Liberties.<sup>1</sup>

The outline of the recommendations of the 1939 Commission for the development of Trade Unions shows how much was lack-

<sup>1</sup> League of Coloured Peoples, *Newsletter*, September 1941, p. 137. In October 1941 there were at least eleven British nationals in Jamaica interned under these Regulations.

ing previously and how handicapped in that struggle were the organizations which did exist. Laws are recommended to protect Trade Unions from actions for damages caused by strikes (compare the reversal of the Taff Vale decision in 1906), to legalize peaceful picketing and to make compulsory the registration of unions, with audit of their funds. The real danger is that the unions so formed will not so much represent the ambitions of workers as mediate in disputes between the owners, the Government and labour, with the tendency always to adopt the official point of view—or else develop into comparatively innocuous friendly societies, much as did the early Union in India. They will take a good deal of their colouring from the labour departments or officers whom the Government appointed in 1942; the experiment will be watched with interest, and probably with no little apprehension.

Throughout the Colonial Empire the organization of Trade Unions is as yet in an embryonic stage, but even within that narrow range there are striking differences in development. Forty-two Colonies have Minimum Wage Laws, but in only nine of them are the provisions of these laws actually translated into practice—even in Jamaica it was only in January 1941 that the first Wages Board was set up to put into force provisions which were permissive. In Barbados, although the law is on the Statute Book, it has not been put into force, the machinery for it standing idle or having been replaced by Conciliation Boards<sup>1</sup> set up on an *ad hoc* basis, so far limited to bakers, coopers and agricultural workers, and co-ordinated by a Central Advisory Labour Board. So long as these are not mandatory, there will always be difficulties, owing to the refusal of certain employers (and occasionally of employees) to co-operate. Thirty-three Colonies have Trade Unions laws, but comparatively few of them have any Trade Unions; there are, in fact, only 160 such bodies throughout the Colonial Empire, 105 in British West Africa. It is perhaps in the West Indies that the most vigorous, though very recent growth may be noticed. In Trinidad they are most numerous and well organized, the earliest of them being the 'Trinidad Tenants' (National) Trade Union, registered in January 1934, and joined between 1935 and 1938 by other bodies representing Building, Oilfields, Seamen, Sugar, Public Works, Transport, Railways, Shop Assistants and Printers.<sup>2</sup> In Jamaica there are six registered Unions, three awaiting recognition, with an additional five organized by Bustamente; but even here the subscribing membership of the registered Trade Unions did not exceed 6000 in

<sup>1</sup> *West India Committee Circular*, September 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 132. Colonial No. 185.

May 1940, out of an estimated total of 231,000 labourers in the island. In British Guiana there are six Unions, one dating from July 1922, but the prohibition of peaceful picketing puts a most serious check on their activities. This disability they share with similar bodies in Barbados, Trinidad and Malaya, while in Nigeria, Hong Kong, Northern Rhodesia, Gold Coast and Palestine, strikes and lock-outs are illegal unless the dispute has been officially reported to the Governor.<sup>1</sup> In April 1941 the Bermuda Legislative Assembly rejected a Bill, which was based on the experience of other Colonies, legalizing and regulating the position of Trade Unions, nor in St. Lucia is there any provision for peaceful picketing or protection from actions for torts.<sup>2</sup>

In West Africa, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia have since 1932 passed Ordinances regulating the position of Unions, but only since 1938 and 1939 has there been any real attempt to bring them into active existence, often with the help of sympathetic Labour officers who had previously worked with the South Wales Miners' Federation and the N.U.R. The Gold Coast has not as yet passed an Ordinance now before Council, giving protection against torts and legalizing peaceful picketing, but when it does, the somewhat sketchy organizations now in being will expand as they are doing in Nigeria,<sup>3</sup> where such bodies as the African Civil Servants Technical Workers' Union, Mercantile Workers, Marine Workers, and Public Works Department have secured registration and will work for the improvement of the undoubtedly bad conditions which exist among most grades of workers. Not that it will all be plain sailing, even when official recognition has been granted. It took British Trade Unions many a setback, many a defeat to shed at least some of their illusions. African Trade Unionism is a tender growth, a veritable mustard seed, but with all the possibilities of its scriptural prototype. It must, however, "be an indigenous development linked with the traditions and aspirations of the people" whom it professes to serve,<sup>4</sup> and it is quite possible that the new types of economic organization which will undoubtedly develop in the Colonies will demand quite another sort of Union from that with which we are familiar in a

<sup>1</sup> House of Commons, October 7th, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> *Empire*, January 1942.

<sup>4</sup> For general consideration see Fabian Colonial Bureau Pamphlet on *Trade Unionism in the Colonies* (August 1941); for details of Trade Unions in West Indies, see *Labour in the West Indies*, W. A. Lewis, 1939, from which the following facts about the Press are drawn. A House of Commons answer (February 9th, 1944) stated that the number of Trade Unions in W. and E. Africa was: Nigeria, 89; Gold Coast, 5; Sierra Leone, 11; Kenya, 2; Uganda, 1; Tanganyika, 2; Nyasaland, nil.

highly industrialized society. It is only when Trade Union leaders come from the ranks of the manual workers themselves that real stability will be secured and progress made; for at the present time the lack of education and the prevalence of illiteracy make it quite an exception for Union activity to be directed by leaders "hewn from the rock".<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important aids to the Trade Union movement is a free and vigorous Press, through which a process of adult education can be carried on, protests against injustice voiced, and a central forum for the expression of public opinion provided. In the West Indies are a number of journals, some of long standing, devoted to the spread of progressive views; in Barbados the *Barbados Observer* expresses the ideas of the Progressive League, one of whose purposes is to organize Trade Unions; in British Guiana the Manpower and Citizens' Association publishes the only labour paper, the *Guiana Review*, with its programme of reform, advocacy of Trade Unions and compensation laws, etc. Trinidad, the only island in which the population is not overwhelmingly agricultural, has three papers, the *Socialist*, *Pilot*, and *People*, devoted to the expression of labour views and West Indian political and cultural aspirations. Similarly, in Jamaica *Public Opinion* carries on its work. In South Africa there are a number of papers expressing Bantu opinion with different emphasis, but most of them marked by a grim determination to right the wrongs of those who read them. A like expression has recently been observed in West Africa, though the papers and broadsheets which appear there are mainly informative, and devote a good deal of their space to news of the regiments composed of Africans. The Hausa newspaper of Northern Nigeria, *Gaskiya Tafi Jvabo*, and a Kenya publication, *Barazon*, reported in 1942 a good increase in their circulation, as also did the Lagos daily, *West African Pilot*. Even in Ethiopia a news-sheet has been published in Amharic, and observers have noted the amazing sale of literature and its eager discussion among the native troops of the East Africa Command.

The cardinal importance of India for most of the problems connected with race and colour, no less than for the whole question of imperialism, is equally true in any consideration of Trade Unions. India is backward as an industrial country, the number of people engaged in manufacture and mining is often exaggerated, and there is considerable difficulty in estimating the total of those engaged. This figure has been put as high as 26,000,000, but those in organized industry—that is, falling within the purview of the Factory Acts, in power-driven factories employing usually twenty operatives or over (for some purposes only ten)—is given

<sup>1</sup> Col. 184, pp. 46-7.

as about 3,000,000, of whom 400,000—or, say, 14%—are members of bodies affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress<sup>1</sup>. The growth of this body dates from the end of the last Great War. As early as 1884 there had been a Union, but it had existed only for European and Anglo-Indian employees on the railways and in Government services, acting mainly as a provident and friendly society.<sup>2</sup> The real organization grew, as so often, where workers were relatively better paid, and so had means of self-education to realize both their own conditions and those of their much less fortunate fellow-workers elsewhere. It was in Ahmedabad that really positive action first began. Here conditions were appalling—Brailsford reports that in one district a single water-tap had to serve the needs of 700 workers<sup>3</sup>—but wages were higher. The Rowlatt Acts of 1919 gave a further spurt because of the protests they called forth, protests which led to the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress and the organization of the first political strike. Thereafter the whole machinery of repression was brought into play—it was a repetition of the tragedy of the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 transferred from England to India<sup>4</sup>: injunctions in the High Courts of Madras against strike leaders (1924); savage imprisonments inflicted at Cawnpore (1924); the whole Executive of the South Indian Railwaymen's Union kept in gaol for a year without trial and then sentenced to ten years (1928–9); Public Safety Ordinance (1929) coupled with a Trade Disputes Act which, while providing conciliation machinery, prohibited sympathetic strikes<sup>5</sup> and limited the right to strike in public utilities, and as later amended in 1934 left it to the Provincial Government to decide whether a strike was illegal. In a half-hearted sort of way Trade Unions had been legalized, under certain conditions, in 1926,<sup>6</sup> but the Gilbertian rider was added that it was open to an individual employer to give or withhold recognition as he chose.

Thus the decade following the Rowlatt Acts was one of severe repression endeavouring to check an almost unbroken wave of strikes and increasing political consciousness. In 1929 were staged

<sup>1</sup> Railway workers are prominent in T.U. organization, textiles slow, miners weak, plantation workers not organized at all; Madras the centre of activity, Bengal the most backward (*Social Service in India*, p. 300).

<sup>2</sup> Lokhande organized a Millhands' Association in 1890, but it did not survive: it was not comparable to a modern Trade Union.

<sup>3</sup> *Rebel India*, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *India Today*, pp. 364 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *The Problem of India*, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the greatest difficulty facing Trade Union organization is the shifting nature of the industrial population: "an exceptionally well-managed mill reported that the entire factory staff changes once in eighteen months". This also militates against industrial efficiency (*The Indian Outlook*, Holland, p. 163).



the Meerut political trials,<sup>1</sup> in which thirty-two leaders, including three Englishmen, were indicted for what practically amounted to treason. Nearly all of them were intimately connected with Trade Unions; one item in the charge against them was "the encouragement of strikes"; and as the Tolpuddle martyrs were punished, so at least nine of those accused were transported after a trial of four years, which had no doubt, as a further result, the formal declaration of the Communist Party as illegal. As recently as 1938 another Industrial Disputes Act was passed providing conciliation machinery, but imposing a delay of no less than four months on the right to strike, while in Assam, where, as we have seen, workers receive perhaps the lowest wages in all India, any attempt to organize labourers has been declared punishable as illegal assembly.

Closely connected with the development of Trade Unions is the question of social services, which for the greater part of the British Colonial Empire resolve themselves into medical and educational,<sup>2</sup> with the latter of which we shall deal later. Let us survey the situation in broad outline first, and, dividing the Colonial Empire into sections, see how large a proportion of the total expenditure in 1937-8 was devoted to medical provision. It will be more convenient, for purposes of comparison, to give also figures for education, even if we repeat them later.<sup>3</sup>

	Medical.	Educational.
East Africa . . . . .	8.49%	5.33%
South African Territories (Protectorates) . . . . .	6.1	2.81
West Africa . . . . .	9.1	6.03
Eastern Dependencies . . . . .	9.02	8.9
West Indies . . . . .	11.35	9.73
Pacific Dependencies . . . . .	10.42	5.49

If we compare these figures with those spent on "interêt social et économique" in 1937 in the French and Belgian Colonies, we find the following:<sup>4</sup> French West Africa, 16%; Equatorial Africa, 11%; Togo, 24%; Cameroons, 25%; Belgian Congo, 12%; Ruanda Urundi, 23%. The figures in the *Economist* have been controverted in the *Crown Colonist* (December 1941), where Economic Development and Social Services together are estimated to absorb 45% of the total expenditure of the colonial revenues.

The lamentable lack of provision for hospital treatment has already been illustrated, but there is one fact quoted by Reynolds

<sup>1</sup> *India Today*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Empire or Democracy*, Barnes, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> *The Economist*, August 9th, 1941; *Crown Colonist*, December 1941, Art. by Sir W. McLean.

<sup>4</sup> *African Survey*, Table XIV.

in his book *White Sahibs in India* which demands an immediate reform. 44% of deaths are due to malaria, for which quinine is the sovereign remedy; quinine can be produced at 9s. per lb., but it is a Government monopoly, and, being sold at 27s. per lb., produces for the Government an annual profit of £40,000! It is managed not by the Health Department in Bengal, but by the Revenue. In 1935 there was a decrease in the sale of 9.4% compared with the previous year. In one year 350,000 Bengalis died from malaria. The amount allotted in the Bengal budget of 1935 to public health services was considerably less than half that appropriated for police services. These are the bald facts of an intolerable situation—child labour increasing, street cleaning and water supply neglected, lighting non-existent, refuse stagnant in the streets. Such is the picture of the social services in an Indian city.<sup>1</sup> Add the facts stated by the International Labour Office at Geneva, that there exist no benefits for sickness, unemployment or old age, that there are estimated to be 40,000,000 unemployed, while even the Workmen's Compensation Act, with its increased benefits, is practically a dead letter, owing to the fear of victimization felt by the 6,000,000 workers whom it was intended to benefit.

In South Africa the provision of social services is conditioned by at least three important factors: what Dr. Brookes has called "financial segregation"<sup>2</sup> has been elevated into a principle of taxation, so that neither the Union nor the Provinces are prepared to find funds from general revenue to aid the Bantu in education or in the provision of social services. There is no thought of treating him as a citizen of his own country, still less of imposing on the European community any taxation for the benefit of the native.<sup>3</sup> The second great factor is the existence of the highly-organized mining industry. It is true that the mines have been productive of tremendous evil, both in the lives of white people and black, but, given their development, it can easily be shown that they have done more for the welfare of the native than any other type of employment by whites—certainly neither the Bantu who live on the farms or on the Reserves have, materially at least, such good living quarters,<sup>4</sup> nor is the food that they obtain probably as good as that provided in the compound kitchens, under the supervision of cooks of their own race, but when that is said, most of the rest is a pretty saddening story. In the first place, it is mainly their poverty and their inability by any other means to pay cash taxes that drive them to that unnatural system of living

<sup>1</sup> *White Sahibs in India*, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Colour Problems of South Africa*, pp. 8-9, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Africa Emergent*, Macmillan, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> *The Southern Bantu*, pp. 141 ff.

in huge compounds, of anything from 1,000 to 5,000 workers,<sup>1</sup> without many amenities except those provided by missions and welfare societies. In Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo efforts are being made to induce the men to bring their wives and families, to build their own houses and have their own gardens;<sup>2</sup> but South Africa, the gold-diggers' paradise, finds this too expensive.

These natives, hundreds of miles from their own homes, are a ready prey to the manifold diseases endemic in the mines, especially phthisis—in fact, the disease death-rate is more than three times as high as the rate of accidents<sup>3</sup>; the wage rates of the Bantu are about one-fifth of the European—and, to crown all, they do not fully come under the Workmen's Compensation Acts. Their lack of organization—one result of discriminatory legislation—makes them ready victims to unscrupulous suggestions for settling claims for injuries at very low levels, so that *ex gratia* payments for accidents may result in a native getting the sum of £50 for permanent incapacity; and though they may have come south to earn money, it needs a strong mind to resist the temptations of the compound and the ingrained love of a "flutter" instinctive in the Bantu heart, so that often they have little to show for eleven months' work. Some mines have adopted a "deferred-pay" system; the revised Mozambique Convention of 1928 makes that compulsory in the case of natives recruited from Portuguese territory, who may not be enrolled for more than 18 months, and after the expiry of the first nine is a shift (which is half the estimated contract rate of pay) is retained by mines and paid to the native after his return to Mozambique; while he is in the Transvaal his interests are nominally safeguarded by a Portuguese "curator".

The third important factor is the Reserves, from which so many of the natives come. The land is the root and source of the majority of the problems by which South Africa is afflicted, and its unequal division between the two races has been one of the most prolific sources of misunderstanding and discord. Five million Bantu have to do with one-thirteenth of the land held by 2,000,000 Europeans; half the native population lives on the Reserves, which Macmillan<sup>4</sup> compares with the British Depressed (Special!) Areas, with no real economic life of their own, from which the fire of economic activity has gone. Now, the effect of the Reserves is two-fold. Generally speaking, the land is poorer in quality, it is rapidly being eroded, it is not well served by rail-

<sup>1</sup> In spite of *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Times* Report, April 12th, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> *The Southern Bantu*, p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa Emergent*, p. 72.

says, it has no real core of economic organization, and it offers no prospect for an ambitious Bantu to be educated. Small-holdings, when tried, are usually too small, and do not suffice to pay for the poll tax, with the result that often 75% adult males are absent on work outside their district for half the year—and, of course, the majority make for the mines, though the work is disliked. Once in, they are severely punished if they try to desert, though 6,000 to 7,000 do so every year. Here is where the bearing on social services comes in. The Reserves are too poor to pay for their own from the taxes raised in the locality, so they do without them—or, at least, have them in an attenuated form. The mines do not bother to provide them, as the native can always be sent back to his Reserve in case of incapacity or illness. In short, while the native looks to the mine to supplement his income, the mine-owner looks on the Reserves as a place where the native can earn money to supplement the small mine wages,<sup>1</sup> and to which he can be pushed back if his services are unlikely to be as remunerative as was hoped. So the native becomes a stranger to both worlds: in the mines he is useful so long as he works; he is alienated from the tribal way of life in his Reserve, he is unable to pick up an effective knowledge of a craft, and he returns, possibly maimed, possibly disgruntled, to a family to which he is more than half stranger and having assimilated a great deal more bad than good.

The increasing permanence of the African industrial population is a fact which there is no escaping; fewer and fewer will return to the Reserves from which they came, and it is not improbable that in course of time a very large proportion of what used to be migrant labour will look upon the towns as their natural homes. In the towns alone are the beginnings of a system of social services and amenities to which the African is becoming accustomed, and which he will find indispensable; but in both the Native Areas and the towns he has to finance his own services. In 1940-41 a sum of £610,000 was spent on the development of Native Areas; of this, not less than £585,000 was drawn from taxes and rents which the natives themselves paid.<sup>2</sup> Johannesburg provides an instance of the policy adopted in the urban areas. The city has two sets of accounts, General Revenue and Native Revenue, any deficit in the latter being met, up to 1938, by a grant from the former. Then in this year the Municipal Beer Halls were started, and proved very profitable, earning £63,700 in 1940 and £75,838 (estimated) in 1941. Consequently no grant was necessary from the General Account. One of the things most desirable on the Rand

<sup>1</sup> In Southern Rhodesia's Parliament, May 26th, 1941, the Minister for Justice and Defence, Mr. Danziger, stated, "The native's wages are pocket money".

<sup>2</sup> *The Union's Burden of Poverty*, Rheinalt Jones and Hoernlé, p. 7.

is the provision of social relaxation as an alternative to drinking ; but so long as the natives drink enough to earn profits for their account, the ratepayer is saved additional expense : less drinks, less profits, greater grants—or, if no grant, then fewer amenities. Up to 1939 the City Council used to make grants for charitable purposes from the General Account, but when the Beer Halls earned a profit, these grants were transferred to Native Revenue Account, so that the natives now pay for everything they receive in the way of social pleasures and such social services as are available for them.<sup>1</sup> From July 1939 to June 1940 the total of such grants amounted to £103,225, but only £4,324—i.e., 4.2%<sup>2</sup>—went to institutions catering for Africans. Similarly, in September 1941 the Rand Aid Society, the largest of such organizations distributing outdoor relief, spent £688 1s. 8d. Of this sum £7 10s. 3d. went to Africans. Here are some of their other disabilities. The pension method adopted by the new Workmen's Compensation Act does not include Africans ; Old Age Pensions are available, on a very small scale, for Coloured and Indians, but not for Africans ; in the whole of the Transvaal there is only one home, accommodating 100, for aged and indigent Bantu ; there is no invalidity grant for non-Europeans except for the blind, who receive 10s. per month ; the system of Labour Exchanges is futile, and rendered most distasteful by its association with the pass system and collection of taxes ; the provision for destitute African children is very scanty, grants being made only when they cannot be "repatriated" (i.e., sent back to the Reserves, still regarded as their "home") or put in a crèche, at a maximum of £2 per family, 10s. per month for the first child, 7s. 6d. for others. The Johannesburg Children's Aid Society in 1941 gave maintenance grants to five African mothers, 360 European, 75 Coloured. For children in need of care, as potential or actual delinquents, accommodation for 7,500 Europeans is available, but the whole Coloured, Indian and African population has to be content with 1,400 places.

We might for a moment digress to examine very briefly the question of Workmen's Compensation in different parts of the Empire and Dominions. The biggest organized industrial unit is, of course, the gold mines on the Rand, where the numbers concerned and the wealth handled give the area a special importance, partly because of its influence on the labour policy of Northern Rhodesia. To compensate workers for damage done to their health, a Miners' Phthisis Fund was formed, by levies mainly from the companies, which between May 1911 and March 1937 dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Who Pays for Bantu Progress?*, Bishop of Johannesburg, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Social Services for Urban Africans", Hellmann, *Race Relations*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, December 1941.

tributed the huge aggregate of £16,803,828 to white miners and mines inspectors. From August 1912 to March 1937 native labourers received from the same source £1,130,309; in 1936-7, £59,894.<sup>1</sup> So we see that even if we put the ratio of black to white workers as low as eight to one, the disparity in compensation is enormous. An Act of 1941 increased the rates for native workmen by adding 10% to the proportion of the monthly payment which they would receive for temporary incapacity, thus bringing it to a level of 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ %, and at the same time doubling the sums payable for permanent incapacity and death.<sup>2</sup> Outside the mining area the responsibility for paying compensation falls on the private employer, and becomes to him a serious obligation, for no companies are willing to undertake such chancy business as accident insurance of natives.<sup>3</sup> Thus in Southern Rhodesia permanent partial incapacity receives from £2 to £15, total from £15 to £50, with the Native Commissioner supervising payments. In Northern Rhodesia serious injury or death earns as compensation a sum up to three years' wages or £150, whichever is the lower, with a minimum of £50, while in West Africa it is proposed that for Nigeria the standards should be £25 for death, £20 total incapacity, £10 partial incapacity; these sums to be fixed by the magistrate, with the additional proviso that civil liability for accidents was also recognized.<sup>4</sup> In some of the West Indian Colonies there is no provision at all for compensation—an added injustice, when we recall that recently severe strictures were passed on the frequent failure to apply the regulations governing the provision of safety appliances; even in those that have made some progress, the qualifying period of absence before any relief can be granted is as much as ten days.<sup>5</sup> In Barbados the first attempt has been made to provide an Old Age Pension. This amounts to 1s. 6d. per week for those who at the age of seventy have an income of less than 4s. a week.<sup>6</sup> Its beneficiaries number 5,000, its cost is £18,000; and in this novel piece of social security—for such it is in the Colonies—Trinidad and Jamaica hope to follow suit.

Macmillan's *Warning from the West Indies* gives an admirable picture of the health services of the islands, showing that they

<sup>1</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1149. The proportion of native labourers to each white worker has varied as follows: 1916, 9·1; 1919, 7·4; 1923, 10·1; 1924, 9·7; 1929, 8·9; 1933, 9·1; 1939, 7·5 (*Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, p. 182).

<sup>2</sup> *International Labour Journal*, October 1941.

<sup>3</sup> *African Labourer*, Orde Brown, pp. 90 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-78.

<sup>5</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

are relatively advanced compared with conditions in Africa and in India, but the mortality rates and the time lost through preventable illness prove beyond doubt how much more is needed of adequate sanitation and the elementary services which a white community regards as essential. Here again we find that there is no unemployment insurance, in spite of the chronic underemployment already mentioned, no factory inspection, and no schemes for workmen's compensation. These three reforms are among those mentioned as highly desirable by the recent West Indies Commission, as well as the centralization of medical services and better facilities for medical treatment, especially in the rural areas. It is, however, a sign of grace in the educational system of Barbados that in 1938 the Government spent, in addition to its ordinary education grant, the sum of £10,397 on the provision of milk and biscuits for the 20,000 children in its elementary schools,<sup>1</sup> while in Kingston (Jamaica) the Children's Lunch Fund supplied 2,800 meals daily—40% free. In any community health services are expensive; they are bound to be doubly so in an area like the West Indies, broken up as the population is into so many small units, many of them parochially minded and unwilling to sink their local loyalties into a larger and saner public feeling. Of the total population of approximately 2,750,000, two of the Colonies claim 1,500,000; the sixteen administrative units organized into nine governments cover an area of only 12,300 square miles (a little larger than the Netherlands), but Jamaica occupies about a third of this. Their problems are very similar, their population fairly homogeneous, their traditions, judicial and legislative systems not fundamentally incompatible (in spite of the situation in Barbados), so that there is every argument for a federal or "island-canton" reorganization of the British possessions in the Caribbean.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### THE COLOUR BAR IN PRACTICE

"It may be your interest to be our masters, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?"—*Thucydides*, V. 92.

"**THE GOVERNMENT** does not stand for a colour bar"—thus the Under-Secretary for the Colonies in 1941; three years earlier

<sup>1</sup> In Jamaica, the Government provided £600 (1939) for cheap or free meals, provided that an equivalent amount was raised by subscription! (Cd. 6070, p. 71). In Trinidad \$10 per annum was spent on free milk for each child, compared with \$17.22 spent on the education of the same child (Col. 184, p. 69).

Dr. Norman Leys stated that during the last fifty years the colour bar has been introduced, insidiously, into all British African dependencies, until now in some it is as high and wide as in the Union of South Africa.

What is this colour bar about which such contradictory statements are made? It was given a legal definition in the Union of South Africa<sup>1</sup> by a series of Acts begun in 1911 and which culminated in 1926 by the passing of the Mines and Works Amendment Act, empowering the Government to make regulations discriminating against the native Bantu solely on the ground of his race and colour, and was thus the classic example of that type of legislative protection which the politically dominant white race has sought to build against the feared advance of the native. It was, indeed, an unconscious tribute to the latter's power, and the measure of the white man's fear that his supremacy was likely to be threatened. It had a most important psychological effect, as it legalized in a way all the other unwritten "colour bars" which had grown up over nearly a century and a half in that country, so that the force of official example was not slow in spreading to other departments where previously it had been unofficial practice.<sup>2</sup> It began a process which soon excluded natives from service on the railways and other forms of Government employment, leading finally to the abolition of the Cape Franchise, which began in Cape Colony in 1853, and ended on Monday, April 6th, 1936, by an overwhelming majority of 169 to 11. But in a wider sense the term colour bar can be used to cover all the various forms of discrimination, social, religious, economic and educational, official and unofficial, which aim at placing native populations in a permanent status of helotry.

Its origin goes back, of course, hundreds of years, and in Africa, which we shall consider first, has been prejudiced by three centuries of slavery; part of it is undoubtedly due to that, but added to it is the white man's more efficient technical equipment, his more advanced intellectual achievements which tend to make him contemptuous of what he cannot altogether understand or appreciate, and his strangely naïve faith, so in these days we may consider it, in the primacy and intrinsic worth of Western

<sup>1</sup> *The Colour Problems of South Africa*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The South African Low-Grade Mines Commission in 1920 reported: "We give a list of 51 occupations in mines, including all officials: in 32 (employing 7,057) employment of white men is obligatory, but not in 19 others, with 4,020 men; yet the 'colour bar' is as rigorously applied in these as in others. Custom, public opinion and Trade Unions are as powerful as law in maintaining an effective 'colour bar'. On De Beers mines in Kimberley, though there was no 'colour bar', it was as effectively maintained as on the Reef" (*Round Table*, March 1922).



civilization. The slave trade was not perhaps so much a European infliction as Arabic<sup>1</sup>; for many centuries Arab ships had brought their vigorous and virile owners to the north-eastern shores of the Continent, and taken them back laden with slaves, ivory and spices, but the real development of the ghastly commerce was due to Europeans. In 1441 the first 10 African slaves were brought to Portugal and presented to the Pope. Just 50 years later a Portuguese priest was the first missionary to the Congo area; the first gold was exported in 1486; soon after followed the traders, attracted first by mineral wealth<sup>2</sup> and then by slaves, but the Portuguese attitude was different from that of their successors, for they intermarried with the native population, and effected a compromise between a rigid white civilization and the *status quo*; they introduced to Africa some of its now typical and characteristic products, bringing, according to Sir Alan Pim, more changes into African dietary than any other nation, including the Arabs; they educated the natives and encouraged their arts and crafts, so that, in the judgment of Macmillan, their achievement compares favourably with that of any other European Power; certainly the evil accumulation of mutual hatreds, based on racial antagonism, is not found in Portuguese colonies, whatever else there may be to criticize. But Portugal could not stay the course, and so the initiative passed to more northerly nations, particularly the Dutch, whose East India Company used the Cape, from the middle of the 17th century, as a stopping place on the way farther East, though soon an agricultural community grew up, devoted, as the name Boer implies, to farming, and chafing at almost any restrictions laid upon them, especially when Britain seized the Cape in 1806. The Dutch East India Company regarded the natives simply as a nuisance, the Boer farmers considered them as useless occupants of valuable land; and so grew up that deep cleavage between the white invader and the black, practically indigenous population.

The Dutch at the Cape were certainly aggressive; the plough, the rifle, the Bible were their weapons, but the driving force behind them was the almost Hebraic zeal with which they preached the doctrine of the inferiority of the coloured peoples and practised what they preached. Neither in Church nor State was there ever admitted the possibility of even friendly co-operation. As one South African, F. S. Malan, has said, "The tradition of equality was not a South African tradition. It was forced on us from outside."<sup>3</sup> They were cold and pitiless. A proportion of

<sup>1</sup> Professor Coupland estimated that this trade was 2,000 years old, and in the 19th century was taking annually 30,000.

<sup>2</sup> *Africa Emergent*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> *Africa's Peril*, Abercrombie, p. 127.

them were originally of French Huguenot extraction, exiled from France by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 250 years ago. By a strange "sport" in the development of human character, some of them who had emigrated to North America became staunch champions of the abolition movement,<sup>1</sup> but those at the Cape were assimilated with the Dutch, though influencing very strongly their outlook and their economic development, for they introduced the art of vine-growing, now so important. No doubt the recently instituted Huguenot museum at Paarl will contain examples of primitive forms of the "colour bar". It is rather significant to note that in the West Indies, where Spaniard, French, British and Dutch all shared in the ownership of slaves, the record of mortality statistics, tortures and floggings reveals that the least severity was shown by the Spaniards<sup>2</sup>; then the French; a big gap separated these from the British and Dutch, who were noted for their harshness. Indeed, in Barbados the penalty for "maliciously" killing a slave was a fine of £10 or £15 on his master.<sup>3</sup> Slavery in Dutch colonies was continued for 30 years after its abolition in the British, to be replaced even then by compulsory labour, till the final emancipation 10 years later in 1873.

The Great Trek of 1836, the foundation of the two Boer Republics in 1852, the ferocious Kaffir wars were all influences which have moulded South African Afrikaans opinion and brought it to the condition in which it is today. Let us briefly review, without great detail, the types of discrimination which have been legalized against the Bantu, remembering that they tend to increase both in number and severity, in spite of heroic work done by some religious and other bodies. We will consider the land question later. In urban areas there has been a steady growth in the number of natives; of the estimated Bantu population, 17% live in the towns or native townships near at hand—a number as large as the total British population of South Africa. Here they live herded together under extremely bad conditions of housing, as do the Indians of Ahmedabad or the natives of Mombasa; they must carry with them various passes,<sup>4</sup> including even the receipt for their poll tax, under penalty of arrest; they may not buy railway tickets without producing a pass; they may not be out at night

<sup>1</sup> "Race Problems in New Africa", Sir Harry Johnston, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Short History of British Expansion*, Williamson, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> The Statute imposing this penalty had the following preamble: "Whereas slaves are, for the brutishness of their natures, no otherwise valued or esteemed among us than as goods or chattels . . ." (*British Colonial Policy*, Egerton, p. 166).

<sup>4</sup> The "Coloured" people are exempt.

between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. without the essential piece of paper; in Johannesburg a native must carry four of these, the absence of any one of which may lead to his arrest. It almost seems to be a crime to be a native. In 1936 in the whole Union of South Africa 24,000 people were convicted for serious crime, while 319,000 were punished for these special offences.<sup>1</sup> In 1939-41, 297,695 arrests for Pass Law contraventions were made in Transvaal alone.

The number of passes which a native may be required to possess is almost ludicrous. One coming from the Protectorates must have a Trek Pass before he can leave his Reserve, an Identification Pass to satisfy the police, a Travelling Pass to buy a ticket. A Monthly Pass serves as a contract of service. When he has reached his place of prospective employment, a Six-Day Special Pass gives him that length of time to secure work, after which, if unemployed, he is liable to arrest. A Day Special Pass gives him permission to visit a location, not his own, a Night Special Pass to be outside after an early hour (9 to 10 p.m.). Visitors to a location must get from the Superintendent a Location Visitor's Pass, those actually resident in a municipal location a Lodger's Permit (costing up to 2s. 6d. a month). If a native carries on a trade he must have a Daily Labourer's Pass, while an Exemption Pass may be given to teachers and preachers, nominally exempting them from carrying many of the other passes.<sup>2</sup> A recent instruction from the Minister of Native Affairs, with an implied criticism on the futility and wastefulness of the pass system, directs the police in certain urban areas not to demand a pass, arrest or prosecute a native, except in circumstances where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the native concerned has committed or is about to commit some other offence of sufficient gravity to justify such action. This does not apply to curfew restrictions.<sup>3</sup>

The theory is that these passes and their inspection, conducted, ironically, by Bantu police, often in a truculent and overbearing manner (there is a white-hot feud between all sections of the natives and the police), tend to minimize crime, though in Cape Province, where the pass system in all its details is not in force, the figures for misdemeanours of the sort it would prevent are smaller. Again, different authorities may make different rules, thus reducing the illiterate native to bewilderment, resentment and burning hatred. Then, if a Bantu in a town area or a native location wishes to increase his scanty wages by taking in a lodger of his own race, the law forbids it. He may not, of course, enter a European

<sup>1</sup> *Union of South Africa Year Book*, "Crime", 1936,

<sup>2</sup> *Hands Off the Protectorates*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Atlantic Charter and Africa*, pp. 165-6.

public library, no matter how well educated he may be, though plans are now laid for opening native libraries in the locations of large towns, the first to be the Winifred Holtby Memorial Library in the Western Native Township.<sup>1</sup> Even Dr. Aggrey, the great apostle of co-operation between black and white, was rudely kicked off a tram in Pretoria when on his way to an official interview with the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs.<sup>2</sup> Over all native affairs broods the terrific power of the Minister, who has the right to make regulations by proclamation for native areas—regulations which he need only lay on the tables of the House—14 days after promulgation, so the original Native Administration Act allowed, though safeguarding amendments have now been passed. He may even deport a whole tribe—or in some queer, undefined way “constitute a new tribe”, though the formula for this has not yet been discovered.

Lieut.-Colonel Oosthuizen, at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society,<sup>3</sup> declared that there was nothing unfair or repressive in the legislation of the Government of South Africa as far as the natives were concerned, for its policy, based on centuries of experience, was the best possible for their advancement. Nowhere did the position compare more favourably, for the public conscience of South Africa had been thoroughly awakened, and would tolerate no injustice to native interests.

Let us examine the matter a little farther. We find<sup>4</sup> a general feeling of irritation at the constant challenge by police, a prison population swollen to overflowing, complaints from the traders that the free movement of natives to shopping centres is impeded. But suppose the native Bantu goes to law. Having overcome his dislike of written forms, he is introduced to a situation where all the proceedings are in an alien tongue, where the jury, if there is one, is composed entirely of Europeans with almost frank prejudice against the Bantu, be he defendant or complainant. In any case where Europeans and non-Europeans are concerned the Attorney-General may order the trial to be held before a judge alone or with two assessors: the Court is at liberty to call to its assistance, in an advisory capacity, such native assessors as it may deem necessary, but this is purely permissive, even where solely native interests are at stake. On one occasion a Witswatersrand

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address, Prof. Hoernlé, *Race Relations*, 1st Quarter, 1941. In 1930 the total was less—161,350; 42,262 for Pass Laws offences, 49,772 Taxation, 20,877 Urban Areas. Of arrests for Pass Law offences, 39,000 were in the Transvaal.

<sup>2</sup> *Aggrey of Africa*, E. Jones, pp. 173-4.

<sup>3</sup> February 8th, 1938.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa Emergent*, p. 198, and *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, pp. 285-95.

magistrate heard 500 native cases in one day!<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to believe that the native usually gets a fair deal!<sup>2</sup>

Then, too, in the wider sphere of national affairs, so far as they are influenced by the vote, the native has been subject to a startling change of policy. Under the old Cape franchise, which went back 87 years, both Europeans and non-Europeans were allowed to vote, on a property qualification which in fact excluded many of the Bantu; in the Orange Free State and Transvaal, Europeans alone were on the register, while that of Natal contained very few who were not European. The Cape franchise had, indeed, been without distinction<sup>3</sup> of colour—it was Rhodes who restricted it by imposing an educational and property or wages test, but it worked well, though not extended to the whole Union on the endorsement of the Constitution in 1909. But for a number of years prior to 1936 Afrikaans opinion felt that the example of the Cape franchise was dangerous, almost an invitation to Bantu in other parts to demand a similar position, so, after an abortive attempt in 1925, another—this time successful—effort was made to abolish the Cape franchise, in spite of the vigorous attempts at opposition in South Africa and expressions of disapproval in London. The members of the House who represent the natives, 6,000,000 of them, are three in number; there are four Senators elected by a complicated collegiate system—and naturally they are all white men. There is, however, a Native Representative Council, twenty-two in number, four of whom may be Bantu,<sup>4</sup> whom it is obligatory to consult before bills are referred to Parliament, though their proceedings are advisory alone, and have no legislative force.

We have already mentioned the Masters and Servants Acts,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> In an important article in *Race Relations* (Third Quarter 1940) the President of the Bantu Studies Society points out that two chief aims of the Native Administration, the simplification of legal proceedings for Natives and the reduction of their cost, have both lamentably failed.

<sup>3</sup> "The Native Franchise in the Cape, although exercised by only 16,000 people, came to be regarded as something almost sacrosanct by progressive Bantu in the Union" (*Native Policy in Southern Africa*, Evans, p. 156).

<sup>4</sup> The Native Affairs Commission originally contained no native member.

<sup>5</sup> In 1918, under the Acts then in force, an employee in public utility services who by striking committed a breach of contract was guilty of an offence. Europeans in the Central Power Service were all subject to a day's notice—the natives to a month's. In strikes of that year, the whites gave a day's notice, struck—and got an increase of wages; the natives struck—and got hard prison sentences. In face of violent protest, mainly from Church societies, the sentences were later remitted (*Round Table*, December 1918).

The North Rhodesian native strike of 1940, in which seventeen Africans were killed, had been preceded by a strike of Europeans, which was successful in its objects—the Africans two days later tried to do the same, with disastrous results (*Plan for Africa*, p. 56; *Colour Bar in the Copper Belt*, p. 4).

and the Industrial Conciliation Acts, which between them make the breaking of a contract a criminal offence, exclude pass-bearing natives from conciliation machinery, give the Minister power to order lower rates for Bantu workers, and allow them no representation on the Industrial Council. There are additional restrictions on trading in the locations, which may be carried on only by special permission of the Minister. All these apply to Bantu who live in urban areas; in rural areas their plight is likely to be even worse, for they are far away from adequate supervision. The law, which is not very accessible to them in towns, is still more remote in the country, for the farmer community, which is not in a strong economic position, as are the mining companies, acts as a tremendous "pressure-group" in its demands on the Government to bolster up its position in view of a prospective shortage of farm labour. There is no approach to a standardized agricultural wage, and vast disparities exist between the sort of treatment, the type and quality of food which native Africans get on one farm compared with another.

While the conditions under which natives live in the Union of South Africa are bad enough in themselves, a further harm is done by the influence which the Union Government's policy exerts on other areas in South Africa, especially those which are nearest to it and most dependent upon it economically. Of these, Southern Rhodesia comes first. The segregation policy to which General Hertzog committed his party, more especially after the Smithfield speech of 1925, was swallowed by Southern Rhodesia, which has a native population of nearly 2,000,000, paying a hut-tax of £400,000 per annum, and a European one of less than 70,000 (69,013, June 1941). Mining and farming are again the main occupations, but the mines are not nearly so powerful as they are farther south. There has been an attempt to divide the land into five categories, half of it going to Europeans, 30% to natives,<sup>1</sup> while the remainder is allocated as a "Undetermined, Unassigned and Forest Areas"—the only snag being that the European area includes all the towns, which Sir G. Huggins once referred to as "the White Reserves", working mines, and all the land within easy reach of the railways! The principle on which white segregation is gradually being carried out is that non-natives shall have first call on all occupations they can undertake in non-native areas, with a similar arrangement for native areas. Actually the tribes have hitherto proved themselves capable craftsmen, especially in iron-work, so that there has been con-

<sup>1</sup> *Africa Emergent*, pp. 189 ff. See the correspondence between Lord Moyne, Lord Cranborne and Dr. Moody, on the Southern Rhodesia Appointment Act; August–November 1941.

siderable alarm at the possibility of their undermining the position of white citizens, with the result that natives are allowed in white areas only as temporary sojourners, and, while there, are allowed none of the normal privileges, or even rights, as citizens. So their independent economic activity is confined to the Reserves, where it simply wilts away. If they try to earn their living on the land, they find that it is very badly eroded, over 1,500,000 acres being so affected, and, as often happens, Nature refuses to recognize the arbitrary boundaries set up by politicians. On European lands the same tragedy is beginning.<sup>1</sup> In 1939 it was estimated that every year 100,000 acres of forest were being cut to provide fuel alone for mines and tobacco-curing, with very little replacement. A Commission which investigated this subject proposed the erection of a National Resources Board, with authority to check the wastage and to conserve the natural assets of the country, but no money had been voted for it up to July 1941.

There was naturally considerable opposition from the natives to the idea of moving from the lands which they had long occupied to others not of their choosing.<sup>2</sup> The termination of their cash tenancies, of their occupation of unalienated Crown lands, and the significant fact that during the agricultural depression marketing arrangements favoured the European farmer at the expense of the native combined to inflame a spirit of rebellion which had to be suppressed by legislation of the Union type, and to encourage a movement to the towns, where they were met by the Pass system, with all its irritations and petty injustices. This urban influx was checked, and the Reserves filled up with 900,000 of the country's African population of 1,225,000 to such an extent that the whole scheme was in danger of breaking down. Normally the native prefers to live on the land, but near a town. Many of them are away from home for long periods, though they do not supply even half the labour force of the country, totalling about 250,000, which has to be supplemented by contingents from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, numbering 149,000 in 1940. The segregation policy has probably a greater chance of success here,<sup>3</sup> for some of its details were started as long ago as 1923, the economic life is not so completely dominated by the mines and

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to observe that in Kenya a small start has been made towards tackling erosion on a few thousand acres of land—belonging to Europeans, whose property is not so badly affected as that of the natives (*Crown Colonist*, July 1941; see also *The Rape of the Earth* (a study of soil erosion), Jacks and Whyte, 1939, *passim*).

<sup>2</sup> *The Southern Bantu*, pp. 193 ff.

<sup>3</sup> One-half the area of the country set aside for European ownership, 22% or Reserves, 7½% for Native Purchase Area (*Native Policy in Southern Africa*, p. 123).

their labour problems, and the Government has, on the whole, tackled its difficulties in a less repressive way, in spite of its adoption of Pass Laws, Masters and Servants Acts, Industrial Conciliation Act, etc. It has encouraged some native trading by the establishment in Salisbury municipal native location of eight shops run by natives for natives, on the success of which will depend the leasing of other similar shops in native areas.

Northern Rhodesia has comparatively recently sprung into public notice because of the prosperity now supposed to be coming to it from the mines in the Copper Belt, which represent 95% of its exports, and from the agitation which has been going on for an amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia. That all is not well in this territory is obvious from the disorders which have occurred in the mines area, the greater part of the labour for which comes from outside the Colony, and from a growth in the "Watch-Tower" movement, which originated in America and has found a fertile breeding-ground in the black proletariat gathered round the mines, and subject to the racial and economic disabilities with which we are familiar elsewhere in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, necessary to realize that the word "exploitation"<sup>2</sup> can be too readily used, without regard to its results, for probably in Southern Rhodesia, and possibly in Northern, the conditions under which the natives live, in territories which are mineral-bearing and were greedily seized from them for that reason, are better than in a territory like Bechuanaland,<sup>3</sup> which, being largely desert, subject to frequent droughts, with one railway and one motor-road through it, acts merely as a labour reservoir for the mines elsewhere, and is the scene of some internal social conflict, as here tribal customs and chiefs' powers are conservative, buttressed by Government support against the growing resentment of the younger generation, whose public opinion is largely disregarded by their elders—a struggle which often leads to the emigration of the most energetic and most competent.

The decision on the amalgamation of the Rhodesias hangs fire partly because of the divergent native policies in these two areas, as some leaders in the Legislative Council realize,<sup>4</sup> and in Nyasaland, which is also brought into the picture. It is only one more example of the difficulties introduced into questions already complicated by wholly opposed and contradictory policies, to which we shall draw attention later. On the one hand is a Colonial

<sup>1</sup> The North Rhodesia native maize-grower in 1936 received from 5s. to 6s. per bag, while the European received 7s. 9d. (*Pim Report*, p. 228).

<sup>2</sup> *African Dilemma*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Southern Bantu*, p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> *East Africa and Rhodesia*, December 25, 1941 (Col. Gore-Browne's speech).



Office policy, carried out by officials whose efficiency and disinterestedness, to which all give the highest praise, operate almost in spite of Whitehall, a system which spends large sums on administration and practically nothing on social services, gives the native some protection, but no opportunity for real development, that relies on a system of grants-in-aid instead of promoting a healthy internal economic life, by which the consuming power of the native will be raised. On the other hand, Northern Rhodesia, so long as its copper mines hold out, is now a profitable partner in any scheme of amalgamation; the elected members in the Legislature desire it; a so-called "Labour Party", its membership restricted to Europeans, supports it, and would accept Southern Rhodesia's colour bar; unofficial opinion, being largely that of natives, can be ignored, for according to Sir L. Moore "we know what native opinion is worth. There is not one intelligent native in this country."<sup>1</sup> The policy of segregation can be extended to the North, the pace of the exploitation of mines and railways increased. Meanwhile delay only causes irritation, for the feeling is growing in the mind of the native that he will not receive fair treatment if the scheme is carried out, while the European complains that a legitimate and necessary project is being unjustly postponed because of the native question.<sup>2</sup>

The treatment of natives is the great stumbling-block in the discussions which before the present war were in progress on the union of the three British protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland with South Africa. The main argument put forward as far back as 1925 by General Hertzog in his demand for such an absorption was the economic dependence of the Protectorates on the Union and the greater advantages which would accrue to the European inhabitants if this came about. Union currency is used there, the natives work in the Union in large numbers—undoubtedly they form one integral economic unit—but here again the treatment of the natives lies at the root of the trouble. It must be remembered that in the Protectorates the native chiefs retain a considerable amount of despotic or autocratic power, in which they are supported by the Dominions Office, so that they are naturally unwilling to enter under any terms which would derogate from the privileged position they now occupy. But there is also an expanding demand for education among the natives in these areas, which leads them to make comparisons between their present state and that which would inevi-

<sup>1</sup> *Plan for Africa*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See the Debate in the House of Lords on the Bledisloe Report, the speeches in N. Rhodesian Legislative Council, and interview with Premier of South Rhodesia, June and July 1939, and Sir G. Huggins's speech, August 1941.

tably be their lot if, as a result of amalgamation, the whole legislative and economic system of the Union were to be extended to them. It is admittedly difficult to test the opinion of the native in the Protectorates in any thoroughly reliable way, but recorded declarations of native chiefs and of educated Bantu are at one in opposing the transfer. Thus in July 1937, one chief, Moshesh, of the Basutos within the Union stated to the *Cape Times*<sup>1</sup> that his resentment against the Union was based on their treatment of the native, and that though he disliked the rule of the present Paramount Chief in Basutoland, the lot of the people there was better than it would be under any proposed scheme of transfer, while Professor Jabavu<sup>2</sup> of Fort Hare College, in a presidential address to the All-Africa Convention, declared that if the Protectorates were handed to the Union, chiefs and people would automatically lose their present freedom of indirect rule, their rights of owning land on which they dwell; they would fall under the Native Land Act, and be subject to repressive Transvaal policy, and to many humiliating ordinances of which England knew nothing. Finally in July 1939<sup>3</sup> the Dominions Secretary (Sir Thomas Inskip, as he then was) stated that it had been made clear that the British Government would not make any decision until the inhabitants, native as well as European, had been consulted, and no final conclusion reached until Parliament had had an opportunity of discussing it. And there the matter rests! . . . But General Smuts is on the war-path.

Let us cast a glance still farther to the North, to Kenya,<sup>4</sup> "the saddest place on the continent", as one writer has called it. Here is a vast area, 225,000 square miles, much of it uninhabitable, with a mixed population of about 3,300,000 natives, 46,000 Asiatics, 13,600 Arabs, and over 20,000 whites, nearly one-third of them living in Nairobi, the capital.<sup>5</sup> Once it was controlled by the Masai, a strong, warlike and physically superb race, who owned great numbers of cattle, and had no use for agriculture: now the vigorous and domineering settler population has crowded them into insufficient reserves and arrogated to itself an area in the Highlands of 16,700 square miles to be used exclusively for white settlement. While Kenya has been made the home of some very

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, July 6th, 1937.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 12th, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4th, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Pattern in Black and White*, Bigland, p. 130. See also *Kenya, White Man's Country?* (1944).

<sup>5</sup> Population statistics in Kenya are largely a matter of intelligent guesswork, since there has been no census. The plan for a 1941 census throughout the Colonial Empire was abandoned owing to the war. For the difficulties connected with African statistics see *Financial and Economic History of African Tropical Territories*, Pim, pp. 25-9.

fine types of European, it has been unfortunate in attracting also just the sort whose private conduct has been a source of bewilderment and resentment to the native, and whose publicly declared policy is to reduce him to a state of semi-slavery. Economically their foundation is of the shakiest; they have limited reserves of capital on which to draw, in an industry such as agriculture, and in a country such as Kenya, where they are most essential; they are not, on the whole, inclined to put all their efforts into making it a success; they have speculated<sup>1</sup> deeply in land, both in Mombasa and throughout the colony, and they have imbibed the view that as many as possible of the native population should be directly or indirectly compelled to work for them.<sup>2</sup> When not so engaged, they should be relegated to Reserves already inadequate, discouraged from growing any crops in competition with the white settlers, debarred from political advantages or even aspirations, and given but a modicum of strictly utilitarian and technical education. Such a mentality is typically Fascist, and it is not without its significance that in a recent murder trial in Kenya,<sup>3</sup> the titled victim of a particularly unsavoury tragedy was alleged to have been associated with a Fascist movement, to have addressed meetings of Europeans, and to have had in his possession Fascist literature and a membership card of the Mosley Fascist movement, some of whose members had been interned.

The crowding out of the native population on to inadequate Reserves has, as we stated, had particularly bad effects on the state of the soil; roughly speaking, 8% of Africa is under forest, but in Kenya<sup>4</sup> the proportion is as low as 2.65%, sinking in Tanganyika to 1.8%. Whereas thirty years ago, among the Kikuyu tribe, one acre in eight or ten was used, it is now one in three, while in the 13 years prior to 1933 the number of native cattle rose from 3,000,000 to 6,000,000. The policy of destocking which was necessary as a result of this produced great opposition from the natives, but something drastic was necessary—it need not have been carried out in the particular method chosen. The normal price for cattle varied between 50s. and 100s. When the chiefs of the Wakamba objected to the slaughter of their wealth, the Government ordered a forced sale of 1,485 cattle at an average price of less than £1 per head. A meat firm opened a beef-canning factory near the Athi River Station, and since the supplies

<sup>1</sup> *Africa View*, J. Huxley, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> "Masters and Servants Ordinances" are in force in Kenya.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 1941.

<sup>4</sup> A Land and Water Preservation Ordinance has been passed in Kenya (April 1941), but nothing effective done: a tree-planting programme has been abandoned owing to shortage of staff (House of Commons, May 7th, 1941).

of European-owned cattle were insufficient, pressure was brought to bear on the tribe, in the sacred name of "destocking", to dispose of their cattle to the firm—but at a price of one quarter of, or even less than, the ordinary market price. Little wonder that the tribe's elders, in a petition, with an irony that has its pathetic side, stated, "We cheerfully pay our taxes and would equally cheerfully pay more . . . if the extra taxation were for our benefit, education and general uplift and the progress of our district, but the policy of compelling even the poorest among us—those who have three cows must sell two and keep one—to contribute to the profits of a wealthy concern, is not understood by us."<sup>1</sup>

The coffee trade in Kenya (and even in Tanganyika) was similarly manipulated to suit white interests. In 1921, before the plantations previously owned by the Germans were handed over, there were 125,000 native-owned coffee trees on Kilimanjaro. The white settlers asked that native coffee-growing should be prohibited<sup>2</sup>; they felt that under native cultivation quality would deteriorate, disease increase (even though on white men's plantations natives themselves tackled the disease) and the value of their name vanish. They were unsuccessful in their demands. In 1922 there were 600 native growers, in 1926, 8,000; in 1922, 180,000 trees, in 1929, 2,500,000; while 90% of the native growers were members of the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association.<sup>3</sup> Then came the recommendation, fortunately not acted upon, that native growers be charged an annual licence of £10—more than the average annual income of a Kenya native: just enough to put most of them out of business. Here was racial and commercial discrimination with a vengeance.<sup>4</sup> One need be little surprised that the most enlightened opinion holds it impossible to bring into one administrative system Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, for the unofficial community in Kenya intend that never shall Africans have political rights in the parliaments of that colony, and they have dubbed Uganda as "too black" for their liking; they would, if they could, undo the whole organization of Native Administration in Tanganyika.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, a word about taxation; the very fact that in 1937 19,000 Africans were lodged in fifty-three detention camps in Kenya, sanctioned in 1925 by Mr. Amery, mainly owing to their

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Jomo Kenyatta, *New Statesman*, June 25th, 1938. A concerted native protest was partly successful. See *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> See also the Ormsby-Gore Report on *East Africa*, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> For the sad fate of this association, which soon went bankrupt, and the misfortunes of the Chagga tribe see *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, pp.

105-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa View*, J. Huxley, pp. 55, 56; *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *My Tanganyika Service and some Nigeria*, Cameron, pp. 226-7.

inability to pay taxes, throws a rather lurid light on conditions. Some little time ago the direct tax on the native was nominally 12s. per hut, while on the European it amounted to only 30s. (with an additional education levy); in Tanganyika, while the native paid on the average 10% of his earnings each year in poll tax, the European average was just over 1%. Kenya, at the moment, is enjoying a measure of prosperity, with a revenue which has increased during 1940-41 by a quarter of a million pounds to £2,722,000. In spite of this the Departments of Medicine and Education are to receive £8,000 less grant, while grants to those of Land, Agriculture and Veterinary Services drop by £20,000—this in a country like Kenya. At the same time *The East African Standard* comments: "We are unable to understand why the second War Budget has made no provision for an increase in the taxation of the *African community*" (italics ours)—as though 19,000 tax-defaulters were not enough. Europeans pay a minimum rate of 2s. in the £.

Even in the critical times of war, which throw different races into strange companionship, old traditions die hard. The following letter by a West African soldier is quoted by *Empire* (May, June 1941):

"In and around Nairobi are many African educated members of the Army from different parts of the continent, whose outlook and upbringing are on modern lines. Many have voluntarily enlisted to service the Empire Overseas, leaving very good appointments, out of sheer loyalty and eagerness to play a part in winning the war. European troops are receiving much hospitality from friends in Kenya, whereas we are always judged and assessed by the standards of the local *askari*. In our home country there are talkie pictures to which we have free access, but here the cinema houses are taboo to us. So also are the many canteens and hospitals for troops. . . . We are constantly getting letters from home enquiring about how the people of Kenya are showing us their hospitality. We cannot say much at the moment, like the South Africans and Rhodesians."

A somewhat similar sentiment is expressed in a letter from Tanganyika to a missionary society. "There are some indications of anti-European feeling among Africans in this territory, and I think that two effects of the experience of the Africans serving in the Forces are (a) they are learning of their man-power as men in a mass and (b) they no longer consider the white man as 'on a pedestal'. In my view, the period immediately following the disbanding of the African soldiers will be one of acute difficulty. In the economic sphere there will have to be racial adjustments. The *askari* (African soldier), who in addition to being well fed and

clothed receives 20s. or 30s. a month, will not readily work on a plantation for 8s. or 10s. and very much less acceptable food. I shall be surprised if there are not within the next few years, African Trades Unions and even Returned Soldiers' Associations, to speak and fight for what they consider their rights."<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, is another of those contradictions which are sure to strike the educated native of Africa far more forcibly than the white man: how is it possible to justify the existence of discriminations of all sorts on the eastern side of the continent, while the western side, or closer still in Uganda, seems to manage very well without them—or at least has reduced them to a very considerable degree? And how is it possible to justify the use by Gold Coast natives of expensive weapons of war, when in South Africa the Bantu may hardly look at a machine, much less handle one?<sup>2</sup> The co-operation in the Abyssinian campaign of West African and South African troops has probably given both rather an eye-opener: it has shown the South African what education and confidence in them can do for the natives, while the West African may wonder, in his heart, why the Bantu allows himself to be placed in such a position of inferiority by white people who are only doing the same work as himself. The situation has its dangers for both sides, as well as its opportunities.

There are one or two more factors which complicate the already difficult position in Kenya.<sup>3</sup> In 1896, 20,000 Indians were "imported", at a time when labour was scarce, for work on the roads and the railways from the coast to Victoria Nyanza. Frugal and economical in their personal habits, shirking no hard task, they soon passed from the stage of being employed in such public works to running the stores which the white man was too proud to operate, and then buying up from their savings property in areas on the brink of development. They spread south through Nyasaland and the Rhodesias, firmly fortifying themselves economically and receiving support from powerful Indian interests in their native country. In Tanganyika their influence is all-powerful: in Dar-es-Salaam a community of 5,000, compared with 1,200 Europeans and 25,000 natives, owns all the hotels, cinemas and business premises; 90% of the houses belong to them, they control between 70% and 80% of the retail, and 40% of the wholesale business, and have enormous interests in the output of

<sup>1</sup> *The Atlantic Charter and Africa*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Bantu have been recruited in South Africa for military service, but are not allowed to handle fire-arms; instead they were armed with assegais!—to meet tanks and dive-bombers!—*Round Table*, No. 128 (September 1942), p. 525.

<sup>3</sup> Actually the first grants of exclusive right to trade in Mozambique were given as early as 1686 to Hindu traders who had settled there (*Economic History of Tropical Africa*, Pim, p. 19).

cotton and sisal. Up-country practically all the jobs of any worth are held by Indians.

It is unfortunate that the first Indians who came to Kenya were on the whole drawn from the less desirable classes, so that when they rose to positions of authority and prosperity which gave them command of cheap African labour they showed themselves to be stern masters, with a strong idea of their own superiority, at least intellectually and commercially, over their employees. They themselves recognized this, in part, by their willingness to accept a high educational standard in qualifying for the franchise,<sup>1</sup> but it did not prevent very bitter feelings between African and Indian, for the former saw in the latter one more obstacle set in his path of development, one more race lording it over himself. Now the situation has gone so far that it is almost past remedy; the African again has to pay the penalty for the lack of foresight on the part of his white master in allowing such emigrants to entrench themselves so firmly, and he has to endure influences upon his mentality which are unfortunate in almost every way.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps some of the difficulties have a psychological background. In his own country the Indian finds himself repressed and thwarted at nearly every turn by a variety of forces controlled for the most part by white men, of which he is the victim; but here, in a land politically controlled by whites but not extensively settled, he is comparatively free of their repressions, and, by a sort of compensation, acts towards others as others have acted towards him, and the lesson has lost nothing in the learning. It is another contradiction, on the solution of which so much else depends.

The Indian, of course, has his grievance: to him it is nothing less than patent injustice that the community which pays the larger share of town taxes should have no elected representatives on municipal councils, while the greater part of the taxes so paid goes to the improvement of the predominantly European quarters. Or again, when the Colonial Office decided to retain control of the administration in face of what amounted to rebellion on the part of the white settlers, and allow only an elective advisory council,<sup>3</sup> with a certain proportion of representatives elected by whites, Indians naturally resented the much smaller proportion allowed to them in spite of their numbers and wealth.

The movement came to a head in the year preceding the war, when the Imperial Government decided to continue, "for purposes of administrative convenience", the practice of the last 30 years, begun by Lord Elgin in 1908, not to permit non-

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Outlook*, Holland, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Pattern in Black and White*, Bigland, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> *The Indian Outlook*, Holland, p. 62.

European ownership of agricultural land in the Highlands area. This policy of the White Highlands has for long been the source of unending irritations, alike to the Home Government, the authorities in Kenya, the settlers,<sup>1</sup> the natives, the Arabs and the Indians—in fact, the whole colony. The Order in Council of March 1st, 1939, extended the area in the Highlands, where land may be owned by white settlers, British or alien, while at the same time further restrictions were placed on natives who were excluded from stretches of land situated outside the Reserves, such as temporary reserves and native leasehold areas. Protests poured in from the Kikuyu Central Association and other native bodies, stating that 100,000 squatters and others would be driven off areas which from time immemorial had been held by their ancestors. But much more serious was the Asiatic reaction. Mombasa was flooded with protesting Indians and Arabs, who also made common cause with the native. The Indian Highlands League, under Mr. A. B. Patel, sought the active co-operation of everyone—European, Indian, Arab, African—who wished to see amicable relations in Kenya. The Arabs from all four East African territories met in conference at Nairobi; Indian Congress and the Indian Government took a hand, the latter in a *communiqué* which declared its sympathy with Indian opinion and its disappointment at the decision, particularly because of the preference which it accorded even to non-British subjects of European race. An Indian delegation left Nairobi for London, hoping to induce the Government of India to move in the matter, while Lord Francis Scott, leader of the settlers, declared, “We do not tolerate interference from local Indians, or from the Government of India, or anybody else in this question”. That put the whole of the settlers’ philosophy of life and action in a nutshell! It is rather important, however, to notice that there has been a certain change in the attitude of quite a number of Europeans, who have come to see in this policy of the White Highlands a travesty of the declared policy of “equality for all” by excluding Indian British subjects and allowing white aliens to settle in, just because of their race.<sup>2</sup> The whole problem is now in “cold storage” for the duration of the war. Perhaps it would be truer to say that it is simmering on the hob, waiting to boil over; but it only illustrates one more contradiction: why should it be possible in Northern Nigeria (or even next door, in the kingdom of Buganda) to declare *all* land to be native land, vesting control in the Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the settlements outlined in 1920 by Lord Milner, 1922, Mr. Churchill, 1923, the Wood-Winterton Scheme.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Daily Telegraph*, January 1st, 1938, February 25th, April 11th, 12th, 13th, 17th, May 23rd, 1939, etc.



ment, subject to native rights and customs, while in Kenya the ownership by the native of his own ancestral soil would cause an earthquake violent enough to bring down every settler's house?

Of course the Indian problem in Africa is not by any means limited to Kenya—it is one of the oldest that the Union has had to face, and harder, for the fact that Mr. Gandhi was one of the protagonists in the struggle, in days long before the Union, for the recognition of the primary rights of his fellow-countrymen—a struggle which cost him several sentences of imprisonment<sup>1</sup>; it is one of the paradoxes of his character and his actions that he came out of gaol and recruited an Indian Ambulance Corps for the Government during the Boer War, and refused to “cash in” on the revolutionary situation caused by the 1913 armed strike on the Rand. From about 1860 onwards Indian labourers had been brought in as indentured labour, especially to work on the sugar plantations in Natal, where the majority of them still are, but within 25 years there had been begun a stream of legislation designed to check the flow of immigrants. In 1913 the Immigrants Regulation Act gave the Minister of the Interior power to exclude certain types on economic, personal or educational grounds from entrance, in pursuance of which he proclaimed that all Asiatics were unsuited to the requirements of the Union<sup>2</sup>—a policy which was carried to its logical completion by the Class Areas Bill, which the Government of General Smuts sponsored in 1924 in order to establish urban residential and trading reserves to which “persons other than natives having racial characteristics in common”<sup>3</sup> would be restricted. This type of legislation characterizes the attitude of the Union towards Indians. There are some 220,000 within its borders, of whom 142,000 live in Natal, the majority of the rest in Transvaal. At first a particularly heavy tax was proposed upon them—one which Bishop Whitehead estimated as equivalent to 7s. in the £ for families with an annual income of £50.<sup>4</sup> In 1939 there was the Asiatics (Transvaal) Land and Trading Bill, of which the liberal-minded former Minister of Mines, Mr. J. H. Hofmeyer, vigorously disapproved, which sought to reimpose residential qualifications on Indians. These, of course, were excluded from the franchise roll, but in July 1939 it was reported that the Government was considering some grant of Parliamentary representation on lines similar to those “enjoyed” by the natives; under it Indians would elect Europeans to represent them! The report went on to say

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Outlook*, Holland, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Christianity and the Race Problem*, Oldham, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> *The Menace of Colour*, Gregory, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Problems*, Whitehead, p. 232.

that there were indications that the Indian community would be more ready to accept the principle of residential segregation if their commercial rights were safeguarded and their political privileges extended. The extent to which even the most eminent Indians are subject to the uncouthness and discourtesy of the merest white guttersnipe is illustrated by an experience in January 1938.<sup>1</sup> It was then alleged that a lift-boy refused to operate a lift when Mr. Seth Govind Das, a touring member of the Indian Legislative Assembly, entered. The Agent-General for India, Sir Syed Raza Ali, is reported to have written a few home truths on that occasion to the employer of the boy concerned.<sup>2</sup>

Since immigration has been forbidden to Asiatics, and along with it even inter-provincial migration, the problem has to some extent died down; but it presents only another facet when we recall that nearly 82% of the Indians in Natal were born there, and the possibility of their returning becomes less attractive and less possible,<sup>3</sup> while the localization of the population in that province causes the "impact of their serious competition in semi-skilled and skilled occupations to be very severely felt by a comparatively small white community", which, like the farmers elsewhere, is continually urging the Government to take drastic measures against the "Indian menace". The Indians are perhaps fortunate, in that they have behind them the influence of the Government of India, which has done what it could to protect their status, but interference in the internal affairs of a self-governing Dominion is a course of action which is not likely to commend itself very strongly. Much was done in South Africa by the former Agent, V. Srinvasa Sastri, whose character and culture, allied to an attractive personality, eventually commended themselves in his three years of office even to those who at first were inclined to cold-shoulder so distinguished a representative of the Government of India; so striking was his influence that a college was founded and named after him in Durban. His stand for the rights of his fellow-countrymen against legislation which discriminated against them on grounds of race alone was at length recognized, and helped both the Indian and the Bantu.

The most recent legislative measure discriminating against Indians in the Union passed the Senate and Assembly in April 1943. This Act aimed at "pegging" the present ownership of

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, January 19th, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the experience of Sir Hari Singh Gour, a lawyer and social reformer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nagpur, who, according to a statement in the House of Commons (June 19th, 1941), was refused admittance to a private hotel in London after an air-raid.

<sup>3</sup> *Race Questions in South Africa*, Sir P. Duncan.

Indian properties in Durban and the trading rights of Indians in the Transvaal; when these latter were originally passed they were supposed to be temporary, but now they are extended for another three years, with the promise of a Commission to investigate the whole problem in the meantime. Apparently South Africa is willing to benefit from the courage and fighting qualities of Indians in the North African and Libyan campaigns, but cannot contemplate their living in South Africa itself without subjection to the same restrictive measures which have been imposed upon the Bantu. Naturally opposition in India has been extreme, from every section of Indian opinion, but without avail, for Smuts is reported to have refused even to meet an Indian deputation who wished him to make some compromise on the subject without passing so distasteful a legal measure; they were even willing for some restrictions, provided they were done by pressure of public opinion on sellers and buyers of property. This "Black Bill" will certainly not improve relations between India and South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

In the background of every consideration of South Africa's attitude to the native looms the word "segregation".<sup>2</sup> To that policy it would appear that South Africa is more or less committed, yet every year sees it just as far off, yet still threatened. Why isn't it put into practice? For the simple reason that it is impossible. How could a country the very foundation of whose prosperity is based on cheap native labour, be it on the mines or on the farms, divide itself into two water-tight compartments, and say "This is for the white" and "This is for the black"? Segregate, they say, the natives in Reserves or Released Areas or on Crown Lands; segregate them in towns; segregate them in churches; segregate them in their cultural bodies.<sup>3</sup> Yet in 1939, when perhaps the last opportunity for segregational legislation was available, certainly

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, April 15th, 28th, 1943; *New Statesman*, May 1st, 1943. On April 22nd, 1944, the *Times* announced the withdrawal of the Indian Pegging Act.

<sup>2</sup> *The Colour Problems of South Africa*, pp. 53-77, and the Presidential Address to the Bantu Studies Society, reprinted in *Race Relations*, 3rd Quarter, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> "The Federation of Afrikaans Culture Societies has requested the University of Cape Town to segregate coloured from European students" (*Daily Telegraph*, May 1938).

"The Students' Representative Council of Pretoria University has decided to withdraw its financial support from the National Union of South African Students, the largest student organization in the country, because the Union does not acknowledge the colour bar as applying to Indians" (*Daily Telegraph*, September 12th, 1938).

"External students, taking examinations at the University of Cape Town are to be segregated in different rooms for the first time, in 1941, according to their status as European or Non-European, as entered on their forms of application. In addition to the examination fee, coloured students have to pay for a Commissioner (invigilator) who is a European" (*L.C.P. Newsletter*, February 1942, p. 16).

for General Hertzog, he caused no little surprise when he announced that no proposals for the segregation of races would be brought forward. Why? South Africa would not pay the price. It would not allocate anything like enough land for those who would be segregated on it. It would not—could not—re-organize its industrial life so as to do without that large proportion of native labour which has been made an integral part of its economic existence. It realized that in a purely native area it might be possible for a native economic life to grow up, based upon native artisans, whose work would successfully compete with that of the whites.<sup>1</sup> Steer has declared in forthright terms that “the policy of segregation in Africa has always connoted a total reduction of native rights—in civil status, in landownership, in powers of industrial combination or political expression, and in wages”. All this the rabid segregationist in South Africa would illogically aim at, but on closer inspection he finds the prospect so ruinous to his material interests that he shirks from carrying his policy to its logical conclusion: instead he passes discriminatory legislation—an injustice here, an irritation there; the loss of an old right in one province, the imposition of one more burden in another; schools for every colour, Scouts and Guides divided on racial lines. A sorry picture! but times are changing!

Thirty years ago, a great Dutchman, Jan Hofmeyer, uncle of the J. H. who fell foul of his party caucus on its native policy, spoke wise words of warning: “With a European population of only a million (as it then was) at the southern extremity of a continent occupied by some two hundred millions, mostly barbarians and semi-barbarians, I cannot help feeling, whatever my own prejudices of colour and race may be, that the political and social security of White South Africa would be none the worse for retaining the good will of the five million . . . of aboriginal inhabitants with whom we live interspersed, and for reconciling them with our own political institutions.” *O si sic omnes!*

In India one might almost say that the whole organization of the country was in itself one gigantic “colour bar” which operated to the detriment of Indians in most of the activities of their daily life, but the ordinary conventional application of the “bar” is seen rather in the social atmosphere which forbids the real intermingling of the Indian, especially with the British white man, under conditions of friendship and intimacy—an atmosphere which carries its baleful influence on the one hand into politics and on the other into the relations between master and servant. It is all the more galling because it is so personal; it affronts natural self-esteem; it is based partly on laziness and ignorance,

<sup>1</sup> *Judgment on German Africa*, G. L. Steer, p. 321.

as when men and women refuse to learn the social customs, or even prejudices, of those among whom they live, and partly on an easily acquired sense of superiority, perhaps only natural when the enormous disparity in numbers between the two races is compared with the political, financial, military and social power which they respectively wield; and it is certainly poisonous in its effects.

It must be admitted that there are parts of the world, under British dominion, where the colour bar is almost non-existent, as in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup> The statute-books of these colonies are not blotted with the dismal roll of discriminatory legislation such as we have seen in South Africa; and even in the most stubbornly British of the islands, Barbados, we find no pass laws or Masters' and Servants' Acts. To a much smaller extent West Africa also is less hampered by colour restrictions, because of the large independent population of peasant proprietors. It is in New Zealand that a sane and just appreciation of the virtues of a coloured race has brought about a condition of equality and a liberality of outlook which have united Maori and British in a single citizenship, conferring equal responsibilities and privileges upon both races, without calling on either of them to abate their justifiable pride of race. The Maori remains an essential element in the social and political life of New Zealand, retaining his own individuality, and contributing even in the most important political posts his distinctive racial qualities. Even before the cessation of hostilities in the last of the Maori Wars, a Maori Representation Act provided for the election of native members on equality with Europeans. Tribes still own their own lands, and no trade or profession is closed to them. There are only about 94,000 Maoris (1936)—in 1898, there were only 40,000, compared with the white population of about 1,400,000, and this makes the problem far easier of solution. Under such treatment a definite renaissance of the Maori has begun, for it has been estimated that the Maori survival rate is about three times that of the European. The Maori birth-rate per 1,000 is 43.67, compared with the white of 22.91, though their tuberculosis death-rate is still nearly ten times that of the white population.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is a danger that some prejudice against the West Indians may be introduced by American labour imported to work on the newly-acquired naval bases (e.g., St. Lucia). In Bermuda there are no coloured magistrates for 20,000 people, the civil service is a white preserve and no coloured nurses are employed in King Edward's Hospital, though it is government supported and Bermudan nurses are all college-trained in America.

<sup>2</sup> *South Seas in the Modern World*, Keesing, 1942, p. 211.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE LAND AND ITS RESOURCES

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."—*Goldsmith*.

"UNLESS YOU preserve your institutions, above all your land law, you cannot, no race can, preserve your liberty." So wrote Mary Kingsley, one of the wisest of all West African travellers and observers, and the whole history of the relations between white and coloured races is evidence of the truth of her remark. At the base of practically all the problems which face South Africa lies the land: it vitally affects the "Native question"; gold-bearing land dominates the economic life of the Union; the shrinkage of land left free for the Bantu governs his rate of migration to the towns; his congestion on inadequate Reserves is a factor in creating a landless proletariat: in Kenya the exclusive settlement on the high lands has created endless problems; in West Africa the economic success of the peasant proprietor on his own land has roused the jealousy of the big combines; in the Congo and in Portuguese East Africa vast areas of land are administered by chartered companies, whose sole criterion is the return made to privately invested capital as a result of the exploitation of their resources; in Rhodesia large tracts of the best land are owned by the Rhodesian Corporation, which looks forward to extensive and profitable sales after the war. One-fifth of the area of another Colony is owned by an English-registered sugar company, which does not cultivate a single one of its 1,250,000 acres, while the inhabitants cry out for cultivable land and cannot get it.<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, not only in South Africa that the land problem looms large; in India it has its own special importance, because we see there a movement in progress, directed by interested parties, in the reverse direction to that which is observed in South Africa. It is a striking fact that the percentage of the population which draws its livelihood from agriculture has shown a gradual and consistent rise. The figures given in *India Today* (p. 185) show how in successive decades from 1891 the figure has risen, 61·1, 66·5, 72·2, 73. In 1931 it apparently came down to 65·6, but it has since been shown that this reduction was due to a change in the method of classification adopted in the Census of that year, and so could not genuinely be compared with the statistics previously given.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, on the old basis the proportion has by now probably risen to three-quarters.<sup>1</sup> Side by side with this is the corres-

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Vol. 376, No. 5, 561 (November 20th, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 29.

ponding decline in the numbers engaged in industry—a fall of 1·2% in the 20 years between 1911 and 1931: the present war will probably change this decline, even if only for a short period.

To what purpose is this increased reliance on agriculture? First of all we must remember that it is not purely choice on the part of the peasant; then we recollect that the landlord and money-lender receive vast sums in all from the agricultural debtor, who may pass his whole life in economic bondage. Various calculations have been made of the total of rural indebtedness—one figure gives it as the stupendous sum in 1937 of £1,340,000,000<sup>2</sup>; in an economic study of one village in the Deccan, twenty years previously, debt amounted to 12% of the capital of the village, its annual interest absorbing 24·5% of the total profits from the land,<sup>3</sup> the rate varying between 12% and 72%, where personal security was accepted. Ironically enough, the comparative security afforded by British rule, the termination of chronic internecine war, measures to combat famine, and the establishment of law courts and legal processes made a fairly safe profession, apart from local hatred, of usury. Its crippling effects were to be seen in such things as the lack of capital to build new wells or to buy and plant new fruit and other trees, leading to stagnation, which struck at one of the factors which used to make Indian agriculture more profitable than it is today—once the proportion of land which could be double-cropped was considerably greater than it is now; in 1886 it was 109 acres, in 1915 15 acres. In the village thus described the average size of the holding was about 2·82 acres; a recent study has shown that of the annual crop value on this parcel of ground, say £10, no less than £7 10s. goes in taxes, rent, interest and costs of cultivation, and it must be remembered that the average yield of wheat in India is only 12 bushels per acre, compared with 32 in Britain and 26 in Egypt<sup>4</sup>; of cotton, 100 lbs., compared with 175 lbs. in the United States. It is a tragic fact that the average yield per acre of rice, wheat, barley, maize, sugar-cane, cotton, linseed, tea, coffee is lower in India than in any of the other twenty-five countries which produce any of them.<sup>5</sup> Nor is all this due to a natural poverty of the soil—it may have

<sup>1</sup> It is 76% in the United Provinces (*Statesman's Year Book*, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> Compared with the Dutch East Indies, where there is little rural indebtedness (*African Survey*, p. 873; *Social Service in India*, p. 107). Indian indebtedness, 1911 (MacLagan) 300 crores, 1922 (Darling) 600, 1930 (Central Banking Enquiry Committee) 900, (circ. £675,000,000): since then agricultural depression has increased it from 50% to 100%.

<sup>3</sup> *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village* (University of Bombay), Mann, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Outlook*, Holland, p. 149; "Indian Village and Indian Unrest", Strickland, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. X.

<sup>5</sup> *Structural Basis of Indian Economy*, Venkatasubbiah, Appendix C.

become poor in consequence of human mismanagement, but its ancient richness has never been doubted<sup>1</sup>: the Indian population has only increased during the period 1880-1930 by 31.7%, compared with 53.8% for England and Wales, while famine deaths during the last quarter of a century were three times as many as in the third quarter of the previous century (15,000,000 to 5,000,000).<sup>2</sup>

Most of the mischief can be traced to two causes—or rather two aspects of the one main controlling policy—the break up of Indian land law to further the East Indian Company's administration, and its collection of revenue; its misconstruction of what an Indian village was, in much the same way as adventurers in Africa misconstrued the whole social organization of a Bantu tribe. Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement of 1793, the details of which were worked out by John Shore, later Governor-General, applied in the first place to Bengal, but later spreading to a great part of the country meant the imposition on the Indian peasant of a class analogous to the English landlord, and armed with such summary processes as arrest, imprisonment and distraint of property—concessions which were not accompanied by any securing of the rights of tenants, or even a method of registering their lands, rents and privileges.<sup>3</sup> Then, following on as a natural corollary to that, the development of India first as a source of supply of those raw materials needed for British manufactures, and then as a consumer of British manufactured goods. It is unnecessary to recount the dealings with India of the Lancashire-controlled "cotton-on-the-brain" Governments, though her metal industries, once flourishing, suffered in much the same way. Thus from 1894 to 1926 there was a countervailing excise duty on Indian cotton piece goods, in the interests of Lancashire's special industry. Mr. Gandhi put the matter in a nutshell when he pointed out, at the beginning of his campaign twenty years ago, that every year India was buying £102,000,000 worth of cotton goods, every yard of which might have been made in India. "Nature has marked out India as a politically independent and an economically self-sufficing country."<sup>4</sup> The facts stand out in bitter contrast to the statement, the truth of which can hardly be refuted.

<sup>1</sup> *India Today*, Palme Dutt, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *India and its Problems*, W. S. Lilley, Ap. "White Sahibs", p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge History of British Empire*, Vol. V, p. 30. "One of the most expensive blunders in Indian fiscal history" (*Social Service in India*, p. 87), because some of the taxes that fell on the poor originated in the need to make up the loss due to the bargain with the zemindars (landlords) (*Structural Basis of Indian Economy*, H. Venkatasubbiah, p. 36).

<sup>4</sup> *The Wealth of India*, Wadia and Joshi, p. 15. In the Punjab (1926) 22.5% cultivated 1 acre or less, 33.3% from 1-5 acres (*Social Service in India*, p. 130).



In India, as we saw in the case of South Africa, the land acts as a subsidy for industry; in the Deccan village which we previously instanced only eight out of 103 households were entirely self-supporting from the crops they were able to grow on their plots and holdings, so that it was necessary for the inhabitants to seek labour of a different type, and from another source to make up the deficiencies which faced them, for the proportion of their income derived from land was only 37%. Here the proximity of Poona and a Government ammunition factory provided the opportunity, but it can easily be seen how very low-grade occupations, or those not requiring full-time workers or completely efficient operatives, might attract some of the village population; the low rates of wages they would receive would in turn depress the standard of those workers who depended entirely on industry for their livelihood. It is on such a class as this that a fall in the price of agricultural produce bears extremely hard. It has been estimated that in Bengal about ten years ago the fall in prices was 28·8%, while rents rose 11·8%; Brailsford in *Rebel India* (p. 49) calculated that the proportion of income derived from land which fell to the landlord, compared with that of the tenant, was 150 to 55. The result was an increase in rural indebtedness which drove many cultivating tenants or owners to give up their land and join the army of landless labourers, less independent than ever, whose numbers during the decade 1921-31 increased by 12,000,000. Consequently there was observable in Bengal a process of change from cultivation by small-holding tenants or proprietors to large-scale farming by landless hired labour employed by wealthy owners accumulating large tracts of land. This is a comparatively new phenomenon in India, and illustrates the breakdown of the old system of land law, complicated and feudal as this was in many respects.

The African land problem is even more difficult; it is impossible to generalize too freely, but for many parts of the Continent (though not everywhere in Kenya) it would seem that the dictum of Sir Hugh Clifford holds good: in 1925, he said, "Local native custom does not recognize individual property in land. The land in the Southern Provinces of Nigeria is the inalienable communal property of the various native communities whose rights to it are based on effective occupation or on immemorial usage."<sup>1</sup> The French in Indo-China acted similarly. "French law was imposed with disastrous effects in a country in which the moral unit was the family, and in which the idea of the individual as the sole bearer of rights and duties was a blasphem-

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Mary Kingsley*, Gwynn, Penguin edition, p. 180.

mous novelty."<sup>1</sup> The rural economy which had this conception of "ownership" was invariably simple, growing its crops for subsistence purposes only, and quite ignorant of a system based on money. It had therefore no idea of cash crops, their growing and marketing, which demand a more complicated and integrated organization through which to find their profitable outlet—in fact, the more primitive Bantu tribes do not appear to have developed any inter-tribal trade or markets: their main wealth was reckoned in terms of cattle, and even now there is considerable reluctance to look upon them in any other light than as a form of money. In a discussion on the Colonial Office Report for 1939, the Secretary for the Colonies said that if in some place a native ate beef, it was as though a man in this country started eating pound notes<sup>2</sup>; and the more primitive the tribe, the greater area did it require both for pastoral and agricultural purposes. This imperative need of the native tribes for practically unlimited *lebensraum* came into violent contact with a similar need felt by the Boers, who hated the alien rule under which they came when the Cape passed into British possession at the beginning of the 19th century—it was estimated<sup>3</sup> that 6,000 acres and free grazing were essential for one man—and their feelings were further exacerbated by the abolition of slavery among Hottentots and negroes, which was completed by 1833, to such an extent that in 1836 they decided on the Great Trek to the North, in the direction of lands where they could control the native population without regard to the British prejudice for their darker-skinned peoples. Here they could give free rein to that first principle, "No equality for the native in Church or State", a principle which in the Transvaal and Orange Free State has its influence a century later on the official attitude of the Union Government towards the "native question".

The outstanding feature of native land-ownership—communal tenure—and the habit of shifting cultivation affronted two of the most deeply ingrained ideas of the Boer farmer, while the practical cessation by the end of the 19th century of inter-tribal wars and feuds tended to remove the artificial restraints which had hitherto operated on the growth of population. No longer was there the same excitement in life. The problem which some observers have noted among primitive tribes in the Pacific—sheer boredom, in the absence of any alternative to war<sup>4</sup>—might have become acute had there not occurred in 1886 that event which

<sup>1</sup> *Development of Modern France*, Brogan, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, June 7th, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Southern Bantu*, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> *New Imperial Ideals*, Stokes (1939), p. 196.

was to alter the whole complexion and structure of South Africa: the discovery of gold on the Rand. Perhaps its most outstanding result has been to weave the native more inextricably than ever into the strangely woven fabric of life, to emphasize still more the complete dependence of white capital and industry on black labour, and to accentuate the opposing interests of agriculture and mining.

Before we consider the actual allocation of land in South Africa, it might be as well to review the population concerned: the figures reveal the following divisions, out of a total of approximately 9,600,000.

	<i>Rural.</i>	<i>Urban.</i>
Bantu (6,600,000 = 69%) . . . . .	83%	17%
European (2,004,000 = 21%) . . . . .	35	65
Coloured <sup>1</sup> (770,000 = 8%) . . . . .	46	54
Asiatics (220,000 = 2%) . . . . .	34	66

The greatest part of the Coloured population lives in Cape Province, and of the Indians in Natal; both the natives and Coloured people are increasing in a more rapid ratio than the whites.

As the wave of invasion advanced northwards from the bases of the south, and more and more land came under the control of land-hungry farmers and prospectors, it was customary<sup>2</sup> to allot certain portions of annexed territory to the natives, usually, but not invariably, some small part of the land they had hitherto occupied. Then large numbers were allowed to stay on what was now white man's ground in the position of "squatters", paying some sort of rent, either in kind or cash or a combination of the two, but not actually employed in the service of the land-owner; some few originally became hired labourers, themselves owning no land, while others, in increasingly large numbers, went for varying periods to work in the mines. Attempts to solve the problem were made in piecemeal fashion, complicated by the other inter-racial difference between Briton and Boer and by the varying degrees of freedom found in the four constituent provinces of the Union. For instance, in the Cape, though economic conditions were poor, the native used to enjoy slightly more political freedom, of which the Cape franchise, inadequate though it was, stood as the symbol, while he was less hampered by restrictions on movement.

The one condition which would make for a happy solution was the allocation of adequate land in the Reserves for the sole use of the native, but this was the one thing that was not done. Instead we find that approximately only 13% was allotted to the Bantu,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, people of mixed descent.

<sup>2</sup> *Southern Bantu*, p. 161.

while the European got the remainder. Not only that, but the Native Reserves were nearly always of much poorer soil, in more remote parts, untouched by modern methods of transport, and very soon incapable of supporting the heavy population which grew up on them. Not only was the soil badly eroded, the native love of cattle led to over-stocking, with no thought of the quality of the animals, and a general miasma of poverty settled down on the Reserves. They harboured populations of 60 or more to the square mile, as in Swaziland, practically all of which is a Native Reserve, with 6,705 square miles for over 140,000 people; in the Transkei the average density is 59, in parts of the Cape 70—compared with a figure of just over 16 for the Union as a whole. "In terms of acreage the South African European has 156 acres per head, the Bantu less than 7."<sup>1</sup> In more enlightened, or better-informed, quarters the unsatisfactory state of affairs is recognized. The Native Economic Commission of 1930-32 declared emphatically that throughout the Reserves they had a state of affairs in which, with few exceptions, the carrying capacity of the soil, for both human beings and animals, was definitely on the down-grade, a state of affairs which, unless soon remedied, would within one, or at the outside two, decades, create in the Union an appalling problem of native poverty. With the exception of certain parts of Zululand and Pondoland, every native area was over-stocked. Thirty years ago the Union Government made an effort to secure more land by purchase for Reserves, but it found that European opposition to the acquiring of enough to make exclusive Bantu areas was too strong,<sup>2</sup> while today the Nationalist party scrutinizes with an eagle eye the transactions of the Native Land Trust. In June 1939<sup>3</sup> it alleged that the prices at which the Trust had bought land were scandalous, to which Mr. H. A. Fagan, the Minister of Native Affairs, replied by stating that the Opposition had picked out particular instances (as Oppositions will) without due regard to the productive value of the land. That something either generous or drastic was called for is evident from the 1936 Land Act, which appropriated £10,000,000 spread over 5 years for acquisition of land suitable for native settlement, and it is probable that, in all, 18,000,000 acres will be secured for this purpose, but not until after the present war, as all land purchase of this type has been suspended.

But agriculture on the Reserves has its own special pitfalls. In addition to progressive erosion and over-stocking by poor-quality cattle, the produce raised must go towards paying the taxes

<sup>1</sup> *The World's Open Spaces*, Kimble, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Southern Bantu*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, June 19th, 1939.

imposed, and that implies something more than subsistence cultivation: it implies selling products in a market where they might compete on favourable terms with the white man's produce—and that would never do!<sup>1</sup> Similarly, since the European may not be taxed for the Bantu's benefit, the Reserves do not get anything like an adequate figure in the Budget for educational or other services, receiving only about 4s. out of every twenty which they themselves pay in direct taxation, so that natives of any intelligence or ambition feel that there is no advance possible for them in the tribal *milieu* in which they have grown up, and in which alone they have any chance of retaining some fragment of the communal responsibility which is one of their distinctive heritages. This education could most profitably combine instruction in some of the characteristic African crafts with an increased attention to the scientific growing of crops and animals designed to introduce a more balanced diet; as one book<sup>2</sup> has put it: "Cash crops usurp the place of a 'Better Food' campaign".

If these, very briefly, are the conditions on the Reserves, what about the squatters? They are being transformed by legislation into landless labourers, unable to hold land in areas which have been scheduled as European, and compelled to a sort of forced labour by economic circumstances. As elsewhere in South Africa, diverse policies had been pursued in different parts of the Union: in the Cape,<sup>3</sup> Reserves had been reasonably large, but soon outgrown by the population; in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, without Reserves, a different outlook gave the native easier access to the European-owned land for his settlement, but beginning in 1913 (though originally suggested in 1905) with the imposition of a £3 fee,<sup>4</sup> increased to £5 in 1936, squatters have now become no more than labourers, subject to harsher conditions than ever before, and almost without the compensation, so often promised them, of special areas set apart for their settlement and purchase. The land-owning native, the peasant proprietor, could no longer exist in South Africa, outside the Reserves, or on the promised 7,500,000 acres which are to be available for native purchase, on freehold terms, under certain conditions. There had been a previous attempt as early as 1894, when, under the Glen Grey Act, various areas in the Transkei had been set apart for native purchase, but the size of the holdings repeated the mistake

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Kenya: Ormsby-Gore Report*: "There is considerable anxiety among the European coffee-planters lest the natives should be encouraged to grow coffee" (p. 152).

<sup>2</sup> *African Dilemma*, Melland and Young.

<sup>3</sup> *Africa Emergent*, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Colour Problems of South Africa*, pp. 59 ff.

that has dogged so much land legislation since the days of Tiberius Gracchus, for they were too small to be of real practical value. The plots now envisaged were to have been fifteen times the size of the earlier ones, but unfortunately the Trust under the 1936 Act has discovered that the land already acquired is even now populated heavily by Africans, so that even when the extra  $7\frac{1}{2}$  million morgen are purchased, allotments must be restricted to 5 morgen arable land, and pasture for ten head of large stock or twenty small—an allowance which both chiefs and people criticize as being quite inadequate, joined as it is to an annual rent of 30s.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen, therefore, that the conditions neither of those natives still living on the Reserves nor of those employed as labourers were such as to satisfy the ambitions of the Bantu, or even to provide a well-balanced economic life: above all, there was the tremendous pull of life in the towns or employment in the mines, which acted as a magnet of great power, attracting like iron filings long lines of natives from every district in the southern part of the Continent. It is not surprising that the urban native population doubled within the 15 years 1921–36, and that the first sources of supply should be those Reserves, particularly in those parts of the Union where economic conditions were most distressed, or from the Orange Free State, where the Native Land Act operated most harshly—in fact about half come from the Union, and the rest in almost equal proportions from the Protectorates in the north and from Portuguese East Africa. At first they came alone, but it is interesting to note that between 1911 and 1921 the male increase was 7·2%, but the female 50·33%.<sup>2</sup> The recent flourishing state of the gold-mines made the demand even greater than it was before—in 1937 the number employed was about 307,000; in March 1941 it had risen to 390,000, and a year later to 394,233 (including coal-mines). Recruiting was originally allowed only south of 22° S., on account of the heavy mortality from pneumonia and other pulmonary diseases, reaching 67·6 per thousand in 1911 and 49·34 in 1912,<sup>3</sup> which till then were not countered by the vaccine treatment and general health precautions which are now general. There were also arrangements with the Government of Portuguese East Africa by Conventions in 1909 and 1928 which limited both the number and length of time for which labourers could be engaged. For a number of years Portuguese territories supplied more than half the annual recruitment. In 1929 these were not to exceed

<sup>1</sup> *Race Relations News*, November 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, p. 221.

100,000, and to be annually reduced by 5,000 until 1933, for a maximum period of service of a year and a half. Late in 1937, when the mines were crushing about 1,000,000 tons a week, the Native Recruiting Corporation was alarmed at the shrinking of its labour supplies and steps were taken to increase the number, by revising with the Portuguese Government the Mozambique Convention, to allow the former total of 100,000 to be recruited, and by joint action between the South African and Salisbury Chambers of Mines to license the enrolment of 5,000 more natives from Nyasaland.

At this time there were 50,000 unemployed natives on the Rand, though one estimate put the figure as high as 93,000,<sup>1</sup> but most of them, especially the natives of the Union, wanted domestic or commercial work—just one more proof that employment in the mines and life in the compounds are not really popular, but, through lack of any attractive alternative, practically inevitable. Nowadays the activities of the recruiters who are licensed by the Recruiting Corporation are much more closely supervised, but there is a good deal of evidence that economic measures, such as the enforcement of debt payment, are employed, while statements as to prospects, when they cannot be checked, are often utterly misleading, as they were when Indian labour was being recruited for indentured service on the sugar plantations in Fiji.<sup>2</sup> It is well to bear in mind the words of Lord Olivier,<sup>3</sup> who attributes the great demand for labour to over-capitalization: "The demand for labour is not a need of the community as an organic self-contained human society. It is not a scarcity of power for the maintenance of local life . . . it is for the most part simply a demand on the part of foreign capital for labour force with which to extract wealth from the mineral resources of the soil for the profit of foreign recipients." We have already seen what these profits amount to.

No matter what the ultimate cause, the immediate motive which impels the native to go to the mines is poverty—the impossibility of making a proper livelihood on the Reserves,<sup>4</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Africa's Peril*, Abercrombie, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Problems and the East*, Lenwood, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, Oliver, pp. 91 ff.

<sup>4</sup> The following figures for the collection of Poll Tax (at £1 per head) in 1929 show how low productivity in the Reserves compels natives to work on towns or on farms in order to earn enough to pay taxes.

	Total Tax Collected.	Collected Outside Home District.
Cape Province . . . . .	£431,000	£205,000
Natal . . . . .	315,000	129,000
O.F.S. . . . .	108,000	26,000
Transvaal . . . . .	330,000	149,000

(*Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, p. 305).

legislation which restricts his employment in urban areas; and so to Johannesburg, they troop, to begin a new life, a double sort of existence, artificial and unnatural, from the moment when their finger-prints are taken to the day of their dismissal when their contract is over 11 months later. Off they go, back to their Reserves, now perhaps less frequently than they used to do, changed spiritually, and usually physically as well, perhaps permanently incapacitated and given small compensation, perhaps with the seeds of phthisis already sown in them; however much they dislike the work, desertion is a criminal offence—though each year thousands chance their luck in an effort to escape. Though some amenities are provided by the companies or religious organizations, gambling, secret drinking and occasional visits to town on free days (of course with their pass) have filled up their leisure time. However intelligent and ambitious some few individuals might show themselves to be, regulations forbid the training of natives for more than the most lowly paid work; naturally efficiency suffers, and pooriness of quality must be compensated by quantity. The mines themselves are anxious that a native, once inured to the system, should return to them, as much less trouble need be taken with those already acquainted with the work; but, as in India, this shifting personnel makes for poor labour, and of course renders almost impossible any organization on Trade Union lines.

The curious and often pernicious effects of work in the mines has not gone unnoticed in areas other than those controlled by the Union; the Belgian Congo—or part of it in the Katanga<sup>1</sup>—has been the scene of an experiment whereby there may grow up as a natural product a black proletariat, of workers permanently living with their wives and children near to the mines in which they find employment, and completely uprooted from the land and the tribe that bore them. It seems difficult to imagine this in the heart of Africa, but it has its advantages, for it ends that double existence now imposed on the native. On the Reserve he attempts to be a member of a tribe, owning tribal responsibility, supposed to believe in tribal ceremonies and to acknowledge the superiority of a chief, while in the compound he is at once a slave in working hours, and an unbridled individualist out of them, now accustomed to wages, to various tastes (especially strong drink) and to a scepticism which probably ridicules everything he has been brought up to believe. This dichotomy is a real and terrible peril to the soul of the black man.

What of the effects on the Reserves themselves? It does not take much imagination to see how disturbing it is for the male

<sup>1</sup> *Africa Emergent*, pp. 255 ff.



population to be away from their homes for long periods: from the Cape Reserves three-quarters of the men are away at a time, in Nyasaland the percentage has reached eighty, from the Protectorates a smaller stream flows in, but each absentee from the tribe means a further weakening of the old routine and the old outlook, without replacement by something positive or of greater value. It also means that there is not enough labour to break up the ground properly for planting or to tend the cattle—in the primitive Bantu tribes women are not allowed to perform the latter task—and this lack of attention to the primary agricultural and pastoral life of the Reserve is part of the vicious circle, for poor crops will only intensify the urge to leave the tribe to earn supplementary wages in the mines, and so further deplete the manpower available at home; and male labour is all the more necessary since the plough is superseding the hoe. Then again, it can be no good thing for the home education of the young native to be undertaken only by women and unfit or elderly males, most of whom will have a grievance. It is a disquieting fact that on the Reserves the greatest bitterness<sup>1</sup> against the white man is felt by the black woman, who uniformly hates a system which takes away her husband or sons for long periods to a life which has its great dangers, and sends them back perhaps maimed or broken down in health, or completely different beings, with a new set of values and ambitions; and in the meantime she has had to do the hard agricultural work and bring up boys whose work she will never enjoy, but only see them setting off for the mines, one more batch of "labour-fodder".

The vigour with which native women can make themselves felt was shown by their action in another part of the Continent at the end of 1929. The Ibo women of Nigeria, who have always displayed a keen intelligence, and by their vitality, courage and ambition made themselves both politically and economically the equals of their men, were stung to violence by a misunderstanding over a census, aggravated by economic depression in the palm-oil trade and a stupid tactical mistake by the Government, which pretended that a census taken of men was for counting purposes only, and then used the results for taxation. The Aba riots were almost entirely the work of women, who, unlike the Bantu, had always taken a great share in the markets of the bush, and were regarded equally with men as breadwinners; they resented, too, maladministration and inefficiency in the Native Courts, which were destroyed, together with their records, with the same unanimity shown by the mediaeval peasants in England in burning manorial rolls with the accounts of services due. Their economic

<sup>1</sup> *Pattern in Black and White*, p. 145.

grievances, the recent increases in prices as a result of heavier customs dues, their indignation at what they considered as official sharp practice, led them to break the restraints which African tribes within their own social groupings usually acknowledged, and which made them, on the whole, law-abiding. The authorities were powerless to check them without force, as a result of which some fifty were killed and as many wounded. Such incidents could not occur at many places, for nowhere is women's influence so powerful as among the Ibo, but it is a warning that the African women must not be taken for granted anywhere in Africa, that they can be as keenly alive as the next person to the exploitation of which they are victims, while their ignorance of the cause of booms and depressions in their trade is apt to make their resentment all the fiercer, because they seem to be in the grip of such blind, incalculable forces.<sup>1</sup>

The example of the mines in securing extra-Union natives for their work inspired farmers to make frequent suggestions that natives should be imported to make good the shortage of farm-labour. This shortage is undoubtedly due to the harsher conditions of service now imposed on labourers as a result of the abolition of squatting, and the Native Farm Labour Committee<sup>2</sup> rejected the suggestion as both impracticable and undesirable. They declared that an efficient and contented supply could be built up on the basis of present legislation if only farmers would make farm labour more attractive in comparison with town labour, by paying a higher percentage of wages in cash, by providing better-balanced rations, by improving their quality, and by mitigating some of the harshness of the Native Labour Service Contract (No. 24) of 1932. They urged the establishment of district labour advisory boards and a native affairs department, with representative farmers as members to lay down policy and give advice on these all-important subjects. The real difficulty lies in the lack of capital, so severely experienced by the small-farmer community, in comparison with the great wealth at the disposal of the mines, which have undoubtedly done much to provide good quarters, prepared food and some amenities in the compounds. Yet it is just these smaller farmers who are the most stalwart champions of a segregation policy!

This shortage of labour is no new thing on the Rand; it was responsible for one of those episodes in economic history whose repercussions are felt far and wide. In an industrial conference held in 1903 in Bloemfontein, under Lord Milner, to discuss the

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this episode, see *Native Administration in Nigeria*, Perham, and *African Women*, S. Leith Ross, pp. 19-39.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 23rd, 1939.

shortage of native labour after the Boer War, it was decided that since the opening of new sources of labour supply was requisite in the interests of South Africa, inquiries should be made in Sicily, Japan and China with a view to obtaining them from one of these countries. The last was chosen, and indentured labour was brought in under the "Labour Importation Ordinance", which, acting on the advice of Milner, the British Government ratified, in spite of some opposition, on condition that skilled trades should be barred to the immigrants, who were to be repatriated at the end of their indentures. The maximum number employed was 57,828, in January 1907, and they proved efficient workers, although complaints were made about their indiscipline. The electoral success in 1905 of the Liberals, who had opposed their employment, brought the experiment to an end, and they were eventually repatriated.<sup>1</sup>

If the migration of natives to the mines has had demoralizing effects on the Reserves, it has also carried the same influence to the economic life of the whole of the Union, and brought into prominence a problem that may outdo in importance that of the native himself. The increased flow of natives to the Rand which began about 1914 coincided<sup>2</sup> with another stream moving in the same direction, that of the landless white labourers (as well as Indians), whose position was artificially bolstered up by the white Trade Unions, in spite of the poor quality of much of their work. The great fear of the Unions was lest the Chamber of Mines should use the badly paid native worker to break down the monopoly of skilled or semi-skilled positions, hitherto held by the white, and in so doing reduce the level of wages and the living standard generally. They therefore supported every application of the colour bar, in spite of the fact, according to Sir W. Beaumont, that, apart from the moral obligation, the colour bar is a direct violation of the most elementary economic principles.<sup>3</sup> If need arose, the Unions did not hesitate to use the black labourer in the furtherance of their own industrial ends and disputes, as happened in Johannesburg in 1920, when, during a strike in the building trade, the whites called out the black unskilled labourers, though they refused to allow them to become members of the Union. The natives got no assistance from the strike funds,<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *The Grip of Gold*, Webber. It is interesting to note that the first proposals to import Chinese labour to the Cape were made as early as 1652 and 1657. "We shall do our best in order to promote agriculture to send you some industrious Chinese or Mardykens. It may be that we shall persuade some impoverished Chinamen to go" (*Race Attitudes in South Africa*, p. 27).

<sup>2</sup> *Africa Emergent*, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *South Africa*, Dawson, p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

were left practically to starve. But a far more serious situation arose in 1922, when something much akin to a revolution broke out on the Rand, and cost 216 lives. It was the same fear—that any changes enabling natives to assume greater responsibility<sup>1</sup> would undermine the privileges and eventually the employment of the whites—so when the Chamber of Mines proposed that natives should be employed in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, such as pump-attendants, cleaners, greasers, rough pipe-fitters, waste packers and in the sanitary service, the trouble came to a head, though only 2,000 out of 20,000 semi-skilled or unskilled Europeans would have been involved. In their interests, 180,000 natives were put out of work and immense damage was done. In a recent novel<sup>2</sup> by a South African writer, who gives an excellent picture of colour-bar politics, detribalization and the wedge driven between educated and uneducated Africans, one of the characters, a typical “poor white”, writes a letter from the Rand in 1922 in the following terms: “The reason I am on strike is because they want the niggers to do white men’s work on the mines. If we don’t look out, the niggers will be bossing the white men. I say, keep them down or the buck niggers will be everybody and we will be the niggers’ niggers. I am on strike to save the white people of South Africa, and that is why I am hard up.” This letter, though occurring in a work of fiction, summarizes completely the point of view of the poor-white element. It is their attitude—their instinct for some sort of economic self-preservation—which aligns them politically with the most extreme nationalist elements in politics, for the segregation policy, with all its discriminatory proposals, is, of course, most warmly championed by the men whom General Hertzog used to lead; it is they, and not the Labour Party, who get the majority of these votes.

The Carnegie Commission of 1932 produced a striking report (in five volumes) on this section of the white community, which totalled, in their estimate, 22% of the white population. Of this fraction, no less than 34% were living at a standard below the normal sustenance level, 20% were not in the taxation class, while only 3% approached anything like normal prosperity. Many of these 300,000<sup>3</sup> were enfeebled both mentally and physically, the white “slum population” was breeding at a quick rate, while large sums of public money were being spent on subsidies to keep them from starvation: schemes of work, organized both by the community and by the Dutch Reformed Church, proved failures—and yet this class considered itself far above any native, however

<sup>1</sup> *Round Table*, March 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *The Herr Witchdoctor*, Sarah Gertrude Millin, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Grip of Gold*, p. 226; *South Africa*, p. 312.

prosperous and well-educated he might be. Their political alliance put them in a position which cost the country dear. It was mainly the employment of cheap, and often inefficient labour, drawn from the class known as "bywoner", which was responsible, for instance, for the rise of railway maintenance costs from £40 per mile in 1910 to £100 in 1931.<sup>1</sup> The fate of the boys and girls of these parents, as they leave school and find themselves at once unskilled, and indeed unfit for the more technical jobs, and both unwilling and unable to compete with natives in inferior employment, is one which should cause the gravest concern to those responsible for youth throughout the Union.

In fact, the existence of apparently cheap labour is completely deleterious; because it is cheap from the wages point of view, the natural tendency, as it was with slavery, is to use it wastefully.<sup>2</sup> The employment of highly-paid white men,<sup>3</sup> assisted by an uneconomically large number of Bantu assistants, is one of the factors which make the cost of services so dear in South Africa, for much white labour is not "work" in the usual sense, but only supervision. In fact, the native in the long run calls the tune, because his labour is indispensable:<sup>4</sup> he can, in a way, afford to wait, for he knows that no white man can do without his services, and his instinct is to work for just so long as will provide for his scanty wants, and no labour can be really efficient under those conditions. He may even withhold his labour altogether; it is also the one weapon of self-protection which he has in the absence of any Trade Union organization to look after his interests.

Now, in spite of the seemingly inexhaustible reservoirs of labour-power that exist, there is a prospective shortage: the crushing capacity of the mines has grown steadily from 13,500,000 tons of gold-bearing ore in 1906 to 45,000,000 tons in 1935, and is now well over 50,000,000 a year. The present ratio of white to native labour is about two to fifteen, so that any shortage in the native quota means a reduction or curtailment of white labour. That in its turn would affect the gold output, with a serious result for the whole economic system of the country. That prospect has seriously alarmed both the Chamber of Mines and the European Mine Workers' Union, and is one of the reasons which has led the Union Government to press for the revision both of the 22° S. line as the

<sup>1</sup> *Grip of Gold*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *South Africa*, Dawson, pp. 263 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The new locations built by the Johannesburg Municipality to be rented to natives had to be built by white labour—with correspondingly high rentals (*Native Policy in Southern Africa*, p. 36).

<sup>4</sup> "A community only remains healthy when it does its own manual work" (*Round Table*, March 1921).

northern border of recruiting and of the Mozambique Convention. There is one further source of labour to be diverted to the mines: the natives now on the Rand and elsewhere in the Union who, being unemployed, fell under the Native Laws Amendment Act (1939), which gave them the choice of finding work or returning to their homes. The non-Union natives were the first to be threatened with repatriation, although in mining circles they are considered the better workmen, in spite of their reluctance to enter the industry. At the beginning of 1944 so serious was the fall in native labour (320,859) that the gold output declined by nearly 10% from £113,670,967 to £103,036,120. The Union Government then announced a wage increase for native labourers, to cost £1,850,000 annually; this was to be met from the Gold Realization charge which had accumulated £2,000,000 since 1940.

It is not surprising that the recent extension of the mines "catchment area" has aroused opposition both from the farmers and the mining companies of Southern Rhodesia, who see their supplies attracted to the more spectacular employment on the Rand. The permission given in June 1939 to recruit an extra 5,000 from Nyasaland brought into prominence the diversity of interests between the Salisbury Chamber of Mines, representing the big organizations, and the Rhodesian Mining Federation,<sup>1</sup> which is controlled by the small mine-owners, but the tremendous political power of the great combines has overridden opposition from the smaller and less united federation.<sup>2</sup>

One way which would reduce costs and probably help the native, though it would certainly provoke a revolution, would be to train some of the more intelligent to take over more responsible underground work, and to deal, as they do in the Belgian Congo,<sup>3</sup> with some of the less complicated machinery. Under the Regulations, native workers are not now permitted to commence work until a white man has inspected their "working places",<sup>4</sup> so that frequently they have to wait in idleness until the white supervisor has arrived at the bottom of the shaft. That means considerably increased working costs. Another solution has also been put forward: because of the great danger from silicosis, which is estimated to reduce their expectation of life by 25%, prospective white miners, before they are allowed to work underground, have

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, July 24th, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> In Northern Rhodesia so great is the strain on African man-power that recruitment of native labour for the Rand mines was suspended as from January 1st, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> See *African Survey*, p. 696.

<sup>4</sup> *The Grip of Gold*, p. 186.

to undergo a stiff medical examination, in which 65% of the candidates are rejected. To white victims of this disease, and of tuberculosis—or to their dependents—£800,000 is paid annually in compensation.<sup>1</sup> If natives could be used for some of their work, if “boss boys” were employed in greater numbers, £300,000 would be saved! Native compensation rates, in the few cases where they exist, are proportioned to white in about the same ratio as their wages—1 to 22.

There is still one more element in the maelstrom of South African economics and sociology which we must briefly consider: the position of the Coloured worker, the man of mixed descent, black and white, of whom there are approximately 770,000, or 8% of the total population, the majority resident in Cape Province. As usual with half-breed races, his is a hard lot, but it is saved from being harder by the white man's antagonism to the black, for the former has tended to enrol him in the ranks on the lighter side of the Colour Line, in varying degrees. In the Northern Provinces the social barrier remains as high and unyielding as ever; in the Cape it is less rigid, though still very considerable; in industrial areas there is some slight tendency to favour his admission into Trade Unions, probably with the hope of exercising some control over the wages competition that both he and the black man can bring to bear,<sup>2</sup> and also to guard against the danger that employers, in a desire to reduce white wages, may use the Coloured man as “blackleg” labour, and so split the Labour movement. It is interesting to note, too, that the provision for coloured education is, as one would expect, considerably less than for white, yet the syllabuses in coloured schools are to a large extent the same as for the white.<sup>3</sup> This apparently favoured treatment of the Coloured man does not spring from motives of generosity, nor is it completely thorough-going—it is perhaps an effort to placate or “appease” a portion of the community whose competition is becoming a really serious problem for the dominant race. Professor Gregory,<sup>4</sup> in commenting on the difference between South Africa in 1893 and 1905, noted especially the substitution of coloured and negroes for the white men in many occupations, especially as farriers and blacksmiths. It has only been severe discriminatory legislation that has prevented this process going farther and at an increased rate. It needs, of course, a generation of what one might call “self-interested altruists” to realize that, even economically, the continued repression of the one class absolutely essential to the life of South Africa will bring its own terrible retribution. The only really

<sup>1</sup> *The Grip of Gold*, pp. 167–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Colour Problems of South Africa*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *South Africa*, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> *The Menace of Colour*, p. 129.

permanent safeguard for the white man is a raising—gradual, if you like, but at least perceptible—of the standard of native and coloured living,<sup>1</sup> an expanding voice in public affairs, an increased share of public money, the opportunities for satisfying legitimate ambitions and aspirations—in short, the same rights, privileges and duties that the white man claims for himself. The one certain feature common to systems which depend on the labour of Helots is the undermining and eventual overthrow of the Spartans who dominate them. Fortunately, there are signs, faint as yet, that the leaven is beginning to work in the inert mass; and, as we shall see later, it is, significantly enough, in the sphere of education that the slow process of change is beginning.

G. L. Steer in his book *Judgment on German Africa* has an interesting series of remarks on the differences which exist under the Government of the Union in its relations with natives and those in the Mandated Territory of the former German colony of South-West Africa. He regards the publicity which was given by the League of Nations to reports on internal conditions in all the Mandates as one of the most valuable protections the natives could have; the cessation of that system is therefore all the more to be deplored, as it does seem to have proved beneficial, even if a certain amount of both eyewash and whitewash was from time to time employed. Briefly, Steer points out that the Union Government has put at the disposal of the native tribes ten times as much land as they had in German days: proportionately more land is allocated to them than in the Union itself—in the Union the ratio of white to native ownership, actual and prospective, is seven to one, in South-West Africa three to one.<sup>2</sup> 45% of the Union natives live on their land, in South-West 64%. In the Union there is a poll-tax and a type of land-tax nearly three times as heavy as in the Mandate, while the natives in the latter territory receive back in one form or another a greater proportion of the taxes which they pay.<sup>3</sup> There are two other achievements, one retrospective—that is, a saner preservation of what is best in tribal institutions and the responsibilities of chieftains—the other prospective, offering a hope for the solution of similar problems in other parts of the Continent: the growth of native co-operative societies,<sup>4</sup> unknown in tropical Africa before the war of 1914-18, and first finding freedom of expression in the Mandates created by that war. He finds the same difference in a comparison be-

<sup>1</sup> "Race Questions in South Africa", Sir Patrick Duncan, *Foreign Affairs*, January 1927.

<sup>2</sup> *Judgment on German Africa*, Steer, 1939, pp. 70 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.



tween the French Mandated Territory of the Cameroons and the older French Colonies of Equatorial and West Africa, for in the former 25% of the annual revenue is appropriated to services connected with health, education and economic advance, while in the latter the same items absorb only 11% and 16% of the colonial budgets.<sup>1</sup> It is too much to hope that every Imperial Power would consent to put its territory under a mandatory system; but here is proof positive of the benefits that can be brought to the native populations who live in countries subject, previous to 1939, to the inspection and publicity which Mandates imply,<sup>2</sup> or implied<sup>3</sup>!

We have already discussed the policy in Kenya which has secured for the European population the Highlands of that colony<sup>4</sup>; let us look at it a little more closely as it affects the native. The great problem for large tribes like the Masai, Kikuyu and Kavirondo is to find sufficient elbow room for existence; they are at present herded into inadequate Reserves, the population density of which reaches, in part of Kikuyu territory, the extraordinarily high figure of 500 to the square mile,<sup>5</sup> elsewhere it is 250, and in some few parts much lower. These people had the misfortune to live near Nairobi, where the land was fertile and served by the railway, so they were removed to less profitable territory, where the numbers soon outgrew the available space, with the result that they were forced to migrate and become squatters on European land, to the number of 100,000—a system which they disliked because of their insecurity of tenure,<sup>6</sup> but to which there was no alternative. When employment on European farms could be found for them, it was very poorly paid: in the towns on the sea coast they might get as much as 2s. a day, but upcountry they were likely to be paid from 8s. to 12s. a month. The Masai, who lived on their cattle, were subjected to a rigorous official policy of destocking, which, in the peculiar circumstances of their way of life and diet, held for them no other prospect than that of famine, while the agricultural peoples were met by the determined resistance of the settlers to any extension of their coffee-growing. At every turn they were hemmed in. The settlers strongly objected when, following the example which they themselves had given in their opposition to the Colonial Office, the natives endeavoured to form political associations<sup>7</sup> to assert their

<sup>1</sup> *Judgment on German Africa*, Steer, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> See also *African Survey*, pp. 629–30, 1642.

<sup>3</sup> For an opposite view see *Imperialism and Civilisation*, Leonard Woolf.

<sup>4</sup> The number of holdings occupied by European farmers in 1938, the last agricultural census, was only 1,890 (*Statesman's Year Book*, 1940, p. 208).

<sup>5</sup> *Kenya*, Leakey, p. 77. The Land Question in Kenya was discussed by the Carter Commission, 1933–4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108–10. They have also made war-time conditions an excuse

own rights. On the Legislative Council the 20,000 Europeans, including women and children, have eleven elected representatives, the Indians five, the Arabs one, while the natives have two—nominated and unofficial. Added to their political disabilities is a deterioration of their health, for their former freedom from malaria<sup>1</sup> has gone, while tuberculosis is on the increase. The discovery at Kakamega of gold, of which £500,000 worth was mined in 1938, adds another possibility to the already lengthy list of Kenya's problems, for in this case the land already scheduled as belonging to a Reserve was excluded for the period of a fairly long lease, without "alternative accommodation" being provided elsewhere, though a monetary compensation was paid to the Native Trust Fund.<sup>2</sup>

The trend of the Kenya native to wage-earning, either as agricultural labourers or in mines or railway employment, is illustrated by the growth in the figures of those so engaged, for they rose from 143,626 in 1925 to 182,858 in 1936.<sup>3</sup> There is not, on the whole, migration to districts outside the colony in search of work, but a good deal of movement takes place from the Reserves to the coffee and sisal plantations. The effects therefore on tribal life and native society in general are not so devastating as in Nyasaland, where the problem is extraordinarily acute, but the Kenya native was for a considerable time subject to a more extended system of forced labour, particularly in the years following the war of 1914-18: 150,000<sup>4</sup> were then enrolled as porters, with tremendous mortality from disease. Then came railway construction, with a corresponding call for labour which was only met by a disregard of the regulations and safeguards which had been laid down by the Colonial Office in 1920 and 1921. The Geneva Convention of 1930, which Great Britain ratified in the following year, aimed at the abolition of forced labour, with the exceptions of compulsory military service (as in the French colonies), of emergency impressment, and of work done as a result of a sentence passed by a court, provided it was not for the benefit of private persons or companies.<sup>5</sup> The danger lies in the possibility that tax default should be punished only by

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for opposition to recent proposed improvements in Trade Union legislation. The Kikuyu Central Association and two other bodies have been declared dangerous "to the good government of the Colony", August 1940 (*Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, p. 140). For Native Land Policy see also *British Policy in Kenya Colony*, Dillely, pp. 248-74.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 751-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 676.

<sup>4</sup> *British Imperialism in East Africa*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> *African Survey*, p. 628.

forced labour, either by direct sentence or as a means of paying off a tax; as we have seen in Kenya in 1937, 19,000 natives were in detention camps, while in Tanganyika 31,605 (1936) were giving labour in lieu of tax payments.<sup>1</sup> As with cheap labour everywhere, the temptation is to use it uneconomically, especially as it is probably quite untrained for the tasks to which it is set, so that few adequate safeguards are taken for health and amenities, and no mechanical aids are brought in to cope with the more gruelling and exacting parts.

We may, at this point, look at another system of securing labour practised in the French Cameroons,<sup>2</sup> which, like Tanganyika, is nominally mandated territory. This combined both labour and taxation; when public works were needed—as roads, railways, aerodromes, harbours—the services of the native were called upon either in communities or as part of a general work tax, called *prestation*, under which a certain amount of labour was required, but it was redeemable by a cash payment, of about a franc and a half a day for the ten days which was supposed to be the limit. A large number were called upon to serve, without the adequate supervision that any such method requires. This gave room for all sorts of tyranny and subterfuge, by which the work was unevenly divided among districts, or natives who had incurred the displeasure of an official were kept on for as long as nine months. Soon the iniquities of sanitary and food provision resulted in an increasingly high death-rate, naturally accompanied by a migration of man-power from the districts affected to some point outside the Mandate, for it must be remembered that practically every political boundary cuts across a big tribal boundary throughout Africa, and therefore help in escape was readily obtained. This particular scandal in the Cameroons came to an end in 1925, though everywhere in the French colonies it is still practised in a modified form, and with safeguards laid down by decree.<sup>3</sup>

Among the many setbacks for which the present war is responsible is the re-introduction into the British Colonies of compulsory labour on quite a large scale. In spite of the dislike expressed in the Commons by the Under-Secretary, the Minister of State in Cairo pressed for it in order to expedite supplies for the armies in the Middle East and to save shipping. A beginning was made in Kenya; natives under 45 years of age were to be con-

<sup>1</sup> In the twelve months ending September 30th, 1937, little use was made of forced labour—2,706 porters, a total of 4,639 days. I.L.O. The Defence (Native Personnel) Regs. 1940, permit conscription for military or labour service, but sufficient volunteers have been secured, and conscription has so far been unnecessary (*I.L.O. Report*, July 1941).

<sup>2</sup> *Judgment on German Africa*, pp. 191-4.

<sup>3</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 624-5.

scripted for a minimum service of 84 days and a maximum of 12 months, under conditions which provided for medical examination and objection on the grounds of personal hardship or economic loss to the community. Wages, rations and the type of work ordered were to be supervised by a Central Wages Board; employment would be on European farms, with the limiting condition that not more than 55% of African man-power would be employed outside Reserves; the penalties attaching both to employers and employees were a fine of £5 and/or two months' imprisonment. It was estimated that 22,500 men were required. There was considerable protest at these regulations, which the Government met to some extent by undertaking to limit such labour strictly to the duration of the war, by reducing the penalties to £2, by appointing more inspectors, and by promising not to enrol schoolboys of sixteen. In Northern Rhodesia the obligation to give compulsory service was limited to two months in all, and the number concerned was relatively small, not more than 700 being required for the European farms growing, in particular, maize and wheat, for the former of which a guarantee of price was given, though it was not apparent that this would apply to African-grown crops. A similar Bill was introduced into Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, where the age limits were fixed at nineteen and forty-five, and those conscripted were to be employed in the first instance on Government work.

In Northern Nigeria the controlling factor was the loss of 50% of the world's production of tin in Malaya and the necessity of increasing the supply from other sources. Nigeria, in 1939, mined 5% of the world's total (metal content), and so was an important potential producer. The method of compulsory labour was adopted in order that men most suitable for the work and the climatic zone in which the mines are situated might be chosen, in spite of the admitted surplus of employment throughout the colony,<sup>1</sup> and in order that food production might be maintained at an even level in all areas. At first practically no safeguards were specified, as in Kenya, but later concessions protected the workers and reduced the maximum age from fifty-five to forty-four, giving them the advantage of workmen's compensation and a weekly rest day. Wages, however, though conforming to the general standard, were no more than 10d. a day. It was originally intended to conscript 30,000 labourers, but food and transport difficulties were likely to prevent the enrolment of that number.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated population, 20,500,000; estimated males, 8,500,000. 1938: employed in mines, 46,000; employed for wages, 182,000; surplus or reservoir, approximately, 8,000,000. Yet conscription was adopted!

In Sierra Leone the application of an Essential Works Order had much the same effect as conscripting labour.

The whole tradition of African colonial administration has of late years been moving away from forced labour, even for official purposes; its evil effect upon the internal economy, especially in Nigeria, where it has meant the possible transfer of men from food-growing to mining, its insidious temptation to exercise tyrannically the power thus given, and the opportunities for private companies to draw increased profits from the labour which the Government enrolls for them, and which would not otherwise be forthcoming, are all reasons why this system should be controlled as rigidly as possible and terminated at the very first moment after the emergency which gave rise to it ceases. The undertakings of the Government must be scrupulously observed, and as soon as possible a complete abolition of compulsory labour secured.

Before compulsory labour was introduced into Kenya a Committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities and the difficulties which might be encountered. This body was constituted from officials, settlers and one European champion of native rights, Archdeacon Owen, but it contained no African representative. Of the fifty memoranda which it received, six were from Africans, of the twenty-three witnesses it heard, one was African, and he in the Government service. Of a total male population between fifteen and forty of 687,000, it was estimated that one fifth would be unfit for labour. Among the reasons alleged for the shortage of man-power were the following: "Increased wealth of the African due to the Pax Britannica leading to increased production in the Reserves and therefore competition between production in the Reserves and work for wages outside". "Rise in standard of living of the native." "This is the natural outcome of the processes of civilization; the native has become more sophisticated and demands a greater reward for his labour." The Committee then refused to alter the minimum wage of 7*d.* a day, nor indeed would it actually fix an upper age limit for conscription, for it held that the "aged" would be automatically safeguarded by a medical examination! At 7*d.* a day, and counting thirty days to the month, the originally proposed penalty of £5 was equivalent to the loss of six months' wages; nor was there any exemption from Poll and Hut Tax, which, at anything from 20*s.* to 30*s.* a year, would absorb from 10% to 15% of wages.

It is somewhat ironic that the Pax Britannica in a time of war should be used as the excuse for withdrawing 45% of the Reserve male population from the growth of food in their own lands, compelling them to work outside for low wages, and making their families, left on the Reserves, subsidize the industry employing

them by growing more food to supplement their inadequate wages.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the most terrifying prospect was opened up by the statement written for the *Times* by its Nairobi correspondent, who said that "the colony will watch keenly the progress of the experiment which has the seeds of a political change valuable after the war". Does Kenya hope to perpetuate this obnoxious system, adopted in the teeth of vehement protest from this country, to the enduring benefit of European farmers and the undoubted detriment of its own native population?

There is one more interesting development, particularly in Tanganyika,<sup>2</sup> which limits the amount of native labour available for service to the white population—that is the formation of native co-operative societies, whose members have the opportunity, by concerted action even in the face of European opposition, to make themselves independent of wage-labour by their own efforts in the growing of such crops as coffee, cotton and groundnuts. Kenya, unfortunately, where the need is greater because of the reactionary influence of the settler community, has no such society for natives, and even for whites has put a fee of 25s. on the registration of a Society, whereas Tanganyika is content with 3s. Co-operative societies are no new thing in the West African Colonies of Nigeria and the Gold Coast, particularly important in the growing and marketing of cocoa, though as yet they produce an infinitesimally small amount,<sup>3</sup> nor have they encouraged a taste for cocoa, valuable as it is against deficiency diseases; but they do provide important economic and even political experience, as Scandinavian countries discovered, and help to combat rural indebtedness, a struggle which Co-operative Banks in India, particularly in the Punjab and Madras, are also engaged in waging.<sup>4</sup>

In the House of Commons (November 20th, 1941) Mr. Creech Jones said that fundamentally all development depended on economic planning, and that problems had accumulated because we hoped the free play of economic forces and unregulated production would ensure economic prosperity and general welfare for the peoples in the Colonial Empire. This applies not only to actual production, but to the labour which grows crops or digs metal from the earth. We have seen how in South Africa labour

<sup>1</sup> For a full report, see League of Coloured Peoples, *Newsletter*, September 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Judgment on German Africa*, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> In Nigeria, in 1936-7, Co-operative Societies marketed 4%, in Gold Coast 2.6%, of the total crop: unfortunately in the latter, cocoa sales fell from 7,807 tons in 1937 to 407.4 in 1938, owing to disputes over selling agreements.

<sup>4</sup> There are twelve co-operative mortgage banks in Punjab, while the Madras Bank has 82 affiliated to it (*Social Service in India*, p. 329).

coming into the mines is quite carefully regulated, and the very considerable experience gathered there is available for the solution of not dissimilar problems now coming to the forefront in another part of the Continent where we should hardly expect to find them—Nigeria, the largest of the British Dependencies in Africa, with a population of about 21,000,000. Here there has been no large-scale confiscation of land, no attempt (owing to the climatic conditions) to settle a large white population, and no vast distribution of land to concessionaires—it has remained almost entirely in the hands of its original owners, with the exception of those parts of the Cameroons taken over from the Germans who had assumed ownership and encouraged extensive European plantations.<sup>1</sup> The population thus confined itself to the growing of both subsistence and export crops, palm oil, kernels, cocoa and ground-nuts, to a total value in 1938 of close on £7,000,000 sterling. The price of these commodities in the world market has been subject to violent oscillations, which have usually resulted in much lower profits for the primary producers, who, not understanding these strange and to them most unjust gyrations, have tried to find some more profitable field for their labour; this presented itself to them through the development of various forms of mining, mainly for tin. The numbers involved have grown considerably—in 1913 there were on an average 16,883 native labourers, in 1938, 43,456, this representing the biggest single source of employment outside agriculture.

The urge to engage in this form of labour for wages, which may amount to 4s. or 5s. a week, without rations, if the miner is lucky enough to get a full week's work,<sup>2</sup> is brought about, not by taxation in money, not by a shortage of land, but by the remote and self-interested plannings of a few gentlemen in a foreign country,<sup>3</sup> who can control the destinies of millions of their fellow-creatures, making them dance to their will like puppets on a string. But since the Nigerian native still has his land, and a certain amount of money coming in from it, his labour is more voluntary than it is in South Africa, and in more plentiful supply, too, because of the greater population, so that the mines are not faced with a shortage of man-power, as they are on the Rand. There is therefore no room and no need for the recruiting agencies and their emissaries, beguiling the native to leave his village for the modern Golconda. This sounds all very well, but we must remember that in South Africa both the recruitment and engaging of labour, however

<sup>1</sup> Cd. 6277 (1941), pp. 9 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6277, pp. 58, 81.

<sup>3</sup> The Chairman of the Jos Tin Areas (Nigeria), Ltd., admitted that profits in 1942 were unusually high (*Nigerian Spokesman*, July 1943).

unfortunate they are in their causes and effects, are carefully planned—the man approached by the recruiter is nowadays at least assured of employment, he is medically examined before his long trek begins, arrangements are made for his transport and his food, while he has certain rights to repatriation, and claims on his employer under the security of a written contract, whatever else he may have to suffer. While he is in employment he is provided with rations, which, in order to secure a good return for his labour, are better balanced and more generous than the food which he would buy and cook for himself, and include, in Northern Rhodesia, a substantial proportion of meat.

Now, in Nigeria all this is haphazard. There are no reliable statistics to show the real extent of this migrational labour, no thorough surveying as yet of the labour routes by which it finds its way to Jos or Enugu, and consequently very few rest camps on the road for the traveller, however distressed he may be as a result of his self-imposed journey, often of some hundreds of miles;<sup>1</sup> no guarantee of employment, for some bodily defect may debar him from the work he aims to secure, a defect which would be apparent were he medically inspected before he set out. And if the mines will not have him, he may drift on to coastal towns, where he sinks into that most unfortunate class of intermittently employed water-front labourers, badly paid and worse housed. Even at the risk of perpetuating some of the less obnoxious features of employment on the Rand, or of building up an industrial proletariat, it would be better to bring some order out of this chaos, this waste of human labour, for eventually none really profit from the casualness of it all—the labourer is the victim both of his own misfortune and of unscrupulous employers, the employers get but intermittent labour, and, because of its physical and other defects, inefficient at that, so that here lies a ready field for improvement and reform.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Gold Coast there were fifty deaths in 1937, twenty-eight in 1938, due to starvation on the road (Cd. 6277, p. 91). Even in South Africa, it was estimated that the journey to the Rand in 1932 absorbed 15–20% of their cash earnings, to the sugar estates 27–37%.

<sup>2</sup> See generally *Labour Conditions in West Africa*, Cd. 6277.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE INDIES—WEST AND EAST

"The East and West have been rifled, and the spoiler is still insatiate."—Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. XXX.

LET US turn our attention for a few pages to the Caribbean Sea and the thousand and one islands which dot its surface. Here we shall find an accumulation of problems, fascinating and almost intractable; superimposed layers of history; an amalgam of cultures; British, Dutch and French colonial systems; independent States of Spanish origin; one of the two or three nominally independent negro States in the world; a population once almost entirely alien now regarded as the normal inhabitants; an area once the scene of unbelievable piratical atrocities and social evils, now strategically of vast importance to the United Nations; islands which have known every vicissitude of economic fortune. We have already mentioned the difficulties for the British West Indies of the scattered nature of the islands, where to pass from north to south of the group (it is 1600 miles from Bahamas to Trinidad), or from east to west, takes far longer than the sea voyage from Liverpool to New York, where a stubborn individuality makes the administrative burden of governing sixteen units an extremely costly business, and where an almost strange loyalty and sentimentality have risen, with some notable exceptions, over the appalling downthrust of poverty and backwardness.

The first impact of Europe upon these islands was fatal to their aboriginal inhabitants. It is stated that the Spaniards in 15 years managed to exterminate nearly a million of the Arawak natives of Haiti, and to so completely destroy their culture that traces of them are now among the treasure-trove of archæology, and the same fate so utterly overwhelmed the rest of the Caribs that to all intents they have disappeared. In their place was brought, over a long period, a large and heterogeneous negro population, completely divorced from their own home, and losing practically every trace of their ancestral life and language, to be submitted to the influence of various European cultures so dominating that they adopted them almost as their own, or at least allowed them to become a veneer, a protective shell, over what was left in their memory of the traditions they had been forced to abandon. A life of slavery makes but a poor foundation for a healthy communal existence—and the whole basis of their anterior African life had been communal, within the framework

provided by the tribe, so that the wrong done to the African both in his transportation to the West Indies and in the shattering of his perhaps primitive, but yet effective, social organization has in latter days come home to roost in the difficulties which now face those who would try to repair that damage.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the very foundations of the economic fortunes of so many of the islands proved brittle, for they were selfishly used and dependent on policies far beyond the control of the islanders themselves—or rather the oligarchy which governed them. Upon them beat the full force of several of the world's great political and economic revolutions—American Independence, the downfall of the old British mercantilist Empire, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Abolition of Slavery, the discovery of beet, the immigration of Chinese and East Indians. So the history of the islands presents a never-ending see-saw of prosperity and depression. The planters, particularly the French and British, did “fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world”—it might almost have been called the “Age of Sugar and Rum”, but the improvidence of its inhabitants and the black vengeance which they were preparing for themselves by their cruelties brought it eventually to an end. It was an age over which a false sentiment throws a distorting fog, as it does over the Southern States of America; it obscures the tyrannies of a state of society where the chief beneficiaries for a large part never set foot on the land which brought them their wealth, where managers and attorneys played the despot, and by unthrifty husbandry exhausted the bounteous earth, while the French in Haiti and the Spanish in Cuba, by greater economy, improved irrigation, and the possession of newer soil, forged ahead of the Jamaican planters—always complaining, yet doing little to remedy a state of affairs for which they were largely responsible.<sup>2</sup>

“I like a Plantation in a pure Soyle,” wrote Francis Bacon, “that is where people are not displanted, to the end, to Plant in others; for else it is rather an Extirpation than a Plantation.” Such had been the fate of the Caribs, and to take the place left void by their extirpation were brought the unhappy myriads of Africa. Their first purpose had been to work the mines in the Spanish colony of Hispaniola, transported by Portuguese merchants whose early initiative had given them control of the Guinea coast, and who used their capital of Lisbon as a great slave depot, formally sanctioned as such by a papal bull of 1537, transferring from 10,000 to 12,000 annually as early as the middle of the

<sup>1</sup> For a general description, see Lord Olivier's fine book *Jamaica, the Blessed Island* (1936).

<sup>2</sup> *A Short History of British Expansion*, Williamson, pp. 152-8.

16th century. It was in 1510 that the first African slaves were landed in Haiti. The Dutch and British took a hand in the profitable trade, and a century later 25,000 each year were being imported, mainly in British ships, into the British Colonies, Barbados having been occupied in 1627 and Jamaica, as a second best to San Domingo, in 1665. To the Islands Cromwell sent many of the prisoners of war he had captured in his struggle with the Royalists, as after the fall of Colchester, as "redemptioners"—a form of terminable slavery, but their owners soon preferred black to white labour.

"He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
Not colored like his own, and having power  
T'enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause,  
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey."<sup>1</sup>

Helped by the *Assiento* or contract with Spain, English slave fortunes grew, as did the numbers they dealt with; in the century ending in 1776, it has been estimated that 3,500,000 slaves were brought to the West Indies and British North America, of whom a fifth died on the voyage, and a further quarter in the process euphemistically described as "seasoning". How badly or how well they were treated has been hotly debated; in evidence given before the House in 1789 it was averred that "the slaves have a decided superiority as to every comfort of life over the common labourers and poor people in Ireland and Scotland"—not perhaps a difficult matter, while on the other hand a naval captain declared that "he never saw any sign of happiness except at their funerals, when they show extravagant joy from a persuasion that the deceased has escaped from slavery to his native country". Perhaps it was in the French island of Haiti that the cruelties were most spectacular, though the French reputation was better than that of either the British or the Dutch. Here the *Code Noir* of Colbert (1681-5) was still accepted as the standard, with its savage punishments for attempted escape and riveting of slavery on children whose father was free but mother a slave. A century later an association in Paris, *Les Amis des Noirs*, tried to rouse French public opinion to the wrongs which were being perpetrated on African negroes.

The first motion against slavery in the British Parliament was passed in 1776, and from then until Abolition throughout the Colonies in 1833, the movement steadily grew, the way, as so often, being shown by the smaller countries, for example, Denmark, whose king in 1792 made prohibition of slavery complete in his dominions, which then included the Virgin Islands, bought in

<sup>1</sup> *The Task*, Cowper, Bk. II, Line 12.

1916 by the United States. As in the Southern States, the economic necessity of abolition was long concealed, sometimes by boom periods in the price of slaves, when, as a result of the flourishing state of the sugar-market, their value went up by leaps and bounds. The last years of the 18th century were one such period. The effect was twofold: when the boom subsided, owners found they had paid inflated prices for "articles" from which they could now get insufficient return, while the increased importation of slaves strengthened the resolution of the abolitionists to do away with the traffic. The pious resolution of the British Commons had little practical effect on the governing classes of the islands, who needed the far more drastic lesson of negro revolt to open their eyes to the volcano on whose fringes they lived. Finally, abolition in 1833, with its payment of £20,000,000 to slave-owners in the Cape, Mauritius and the West Indies—a sum estimated to be half the value of the slaves freed—brought about a complete revolution in the economy of the whole area.

It was all very well to pass an Act for the Abolition of Slavery—what was to be done with the supposed beneficiaries of such legislation? What sort of life was possible for an island like Barbados, which 100 years ago was faced with a population problem relatively almost as great as it is today, when over 190,000 people are living on 166 square miles? Apprenticeship for seven years after Abolition was the remedy, but new apprenticeship turned out very much like old slavery "writ large". Finally the majority of the ex-slaves became labourers on the estates of their former owners, continuing to produce the staple crop of sugar, complete dependence on which was one of the results of slavery—a dependence which is now slowly being avoided. In Jamaica, however, there was more land to spare, and with it the possibility of living on an acre or two, without the necessity of apprenticeship or any similar state which reminded the negro so forcibly of his servitude. The standard of living was no doubt terribly low, but the peasants, about 60,000 of whom held their own land throughout the islands, clung to their nominal freedom and generally refused to work on the plantations, thus creating a labour problem which the wisdom of the time endeavoured to solve by the importation of large numbers from the East Indies, India and China. Between 1835 and 1875 these totalled 222,000, including 17,000 Chinese, from 1876 to 1903 189,841 Indians, of whom about 67,000 returned to India during that period; today 36% of the population of Trinidad is East Indian in origin,<sup>1</sup> while in British Guiana, which produces great quantities of sugar, the proportion

<sup>1</sup> *Warning from the West Indies*, Macmillan, pp. 40-1; *Jamaica, the Blessed Island*, Olivier, p. 293.

is 41%.<sup>1</sup> As recently as June 1st, 1940, the Government of Jamaica refused to allow the further entrance of alien Chinese; up to that date they had been allowed to bring in their wives, fiancées, and children under ten years, though their immigration was never a really serious matter.

It would be a long and irrelevant digression to describe the fortunes of the islands and their chief products during the past century, through the mazes of bounty-fed sugar, the setting-up and the dropping in 1847 of preferences, the use of beet from 1850 onwards, the cruelties of Governor Eyre, the reports of an array of Royal Commissions, loans and subsidies, constitutional struggles, the growing freedom from the thralldom of sugar.<sup>2</sup> What of the land and its labour today?

We have already touched upon certain facts; Macmillan has described the various systems of tenure and their shortcomings, from the wealth of his own personal knowledge and experience. The one outstanding feature of all the islands is their poverty and the narrow margin which separates their public revenues from bankruptcy, for with the exception of Trinidad, all the budgets show deficits which put a very effective stop to much-needed schemes of land settlement, housing, education and social services. The labour market tends to be flooded, partly as the result of a high birth-rate, which (with the possible exception of Antigua) is double that of England and Wales; consequently there is not a real incentive (and often not the means) to purchase new and efficient machinery, which would only result immediately in fewer opportunities for employment. Thirty years ago a considerable number of islanders found work in the Panama Zone,<sup>3</sup> in the construction of the Canal, but since that and other outlets—e.g., Costa Rica—have disappeared, they are thrown back on the resources of their own homes, already required to bear a population of great density. The very high incidence of illegitimacy<sup>4</sup> (as much as 71% of all births), resulting from bad social conditions—a feature, too, of Bantu life in the locations of South Africa—tends to create a drifting class without real stability, who migrate to the towns and add to the number already unemployed. In the rural areas employment is haphazard,<sup>1</sup> and more than

<sup>1</sup> *Statesman's Year Book*, 1940, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> In 1899,  $\frac{2}{3}$ ; in 1911,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the exports of the islands, though Barbados is still mainly dependent on sugar and molasses (1938, £1,189,096, out of £1,349,263). In 1936, throughout the islands, there were 243,000 acres under sugar, 240,000 under cocoa, but only 10,000 growing vegetables.

<sup>3</sup> At one time there were 40,000–50,000 in Panama, earning twice as much as they did at home (*Jamaica*, p. 299). In 1919, 24,000 left Jamaica, the average annual remittance home being £125,000.

<sup>4</sup> *Denham Nutrition Report*, 1936–7, Cd. 6070, p. 78.

usually subject to bouts of depression through the absence of mixed farming on a scale commensurate with the needs even of an improved dietary, and reliance on one of two staple crops. Efforts to form co-operative societies have partially failed in the face of opposition from the great fruit companies, while the present embargo on the import of fruit into the United Kingdom cannot but add to the distressed condition of, for instance, Jamaica.

It is not therefore surprising to find that disturbances, economic in origin, have been almost endemic for the past twenty years; that they may be expected to continue is the only conclusion we can draw from the facts of the present situation. Brief attention has already been called to the ill-balanced nature of so much of native diet<sup>2</sup> that it is appalling to find that the import of several articles of food needed to correct this has fallen very considerably within the past four years. For instance, in 1940 the imports of condensed milk into Trinidad, which imports 80% of its food-stuffs, fell by 28%, cheese 23%, beef 20%, fish 10%,<sup>3</sup> potatoes 14%, while at the same time the prices paid for the smaller amounts were 15% higher than they were in 1939.<sup>4</sup> Even so, in April 1942 the Legislative Council of Trinidad rejected a motion recommending such a subsidisation of the price of certain food-stuffs as would bring them back to the price levels prevailing at the beginning of the war—even though this policy was followed in Jamaica, British Guiana and Barbados, and covered not only food but such other essentials as cotton piece goods and fuel, which had been equally affected. Not only was there this rise in prices, but a sum of no less than £30,000,000, of which Trinidad contributed £3,000,000, has been received from the various parts of the Colonial Empire, described by Lord Moyne as “undeveloped estates”, as a contribution to the war effort—a sum which they can ill afford to spare, since some of them have only been saved from economic catastrophe by the bulk purchase of their crops.<sup>5</sup> The admitted rise, even two years ago, of 30% in the cost of living, largely in clothing and food, threatened inflation

<sup>1</sup> “The main body of labourers cannot expect to be earning wages for more than half the year” (Cd. 6070, 1939, p. 17). Rotational employment is common even on public works.

<sup>2</sup> In 1938, 18,024 tons (£167,637) of “polished rice” was imported into Jamaica. Cd. 6070, p. 70. Both sugar and oranges are grown, but marmalade is imported.

<sup>3</sup> This is mainly “preserved”, though the Caribbean waters are full of fish. In 1942, 11,000,000 lbs. were fresh, 25,500,000 salted or canned.

<sup>4</sup> *Labour Research*, April 1941, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> House of Lords, Lord Moyne’s statement, July 9th, 1941. March 7th, 1941: the Jamaica Legislature thanked the Imperial Government for a gift of £1,000,000 to save the banana industry. The Palestine Citrus interests have had a loan of £500,000, at 5%.

and disaster, and it is comparatively small comfort to these colonies to know that when the present war was over they could borrow against the sums they had sent to Britain.

In commenting on the land situation in the Belgian Congo, the *African Survey*<sup>1</sup> notes that one powerful school of thought is strongly in favour of the establishment of a system of peasant proprietorship. How often that has been put forward as the panacea for every agricultural society threatened with disintegration, and how often nothing further has happened beyond the situation in the Congo—"draft decree has been submitted . . . but no more definite steps have been taken". So it is in the West Indies, often without real consideration of the problems involved; perhaps the most important consideration is the undoubted superiority of the plantation system dealing with overseas markets, high-grade crops and skilful marketing, over a haphazard and financially precarious system of peasant proprietorship. On the merits and demerits of plantation *versus* peasant economy, debate is long and furious, with the exponents of both making out an excellent case for their own favourite. Barbados has hardly a single acre from which the maximum is not now being produced, and in that and other islands it is manifestly almost impossible to settle and support in its early and struggling years a society of peasant owners on land which is of great value and is now used intensively for crops which normally have so high an export worth that it is difficult to get any of it devoted to pasturage.<sup>2</sup> Even if it were possible to use land not fully utilized, there remains the question of credit, for, as in India, the agricultural population is already saddled with a heavy burden of debt, and no facilities exist for loan and credit societies to meet the need. Jamaica is more fortunate, for at the end of the 19th century Sir Henry Blake, the Governor, gave the most active encouragement to small settlers who wished to buy, on advantageous terms, plots of ground varying in size from 5 to 50 acres, and at the same time supported the Jamaica Agricultural Society, whose educational services provided the small-holder with advice and instruction. In 1930 the number of holdings of less than 5 acres was about 180,000, between 5 and 50 acres 31,000, but there was still an area of 1,368,465 (56% of the total) held by about 1300 proprietors. In 1938 a reconstituted Jamaica Lands Department renewed its activities on such a scale that in 4 years it had placed 16,000 native Jamaicans (not whites) on plots of land averaging 5 acres, at a cost of about £800,000. Many of these small-holders came from the overcrowded urban districts where unemployment was rife; they paid (unless previously unemployed)  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the purchase price at once, with the

<sup>1</sup> P. 862.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 19.

balance spread over 10 years. Concurrently schemes of co-operative marketing were devised, and social amenities developed. In 1944 the Colonial Office made a grant of £525,000 for general agricultural development over 5 years—a sum which was not only the largest ever granted under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1940), but the first not to be given for a specific purpose but to be merged with the ordinary expenditure of the Colonial Government. In neither Trinidad nor Barbados is the proportion of small-holdings anything like so high. In Trinidad there is one independent cultivator to four plantation labourers, in Barbados one to twenty-eight. In St. Kitts it is one to seventy-three. 585 individual holders possess 49% of Trinidad's 380,000 acres (approx.). The trend to the towns, so widely deplored, will never be counteracted so long as no measures are taken against the conditions which first set it in motion; and these include bad housing, harsh labour conditions, and an educational atmosphere and tradition not sufficiently related to the environment and predominant interests of the population.

Plans have been put forward from time to time for the settlement of West Indies emigrants in areas fairly close to the islands. Barbados, whose first effort at settlement in St. Lucia was made in 1663—and for the same reason—now has a scheme for the development of the same island and offers generous terms, though to a limited number,<sup>1</sup> aided by a Government loan, while Jamaica was similarly interested in British Honduras, which is comparatively thinly populated, but the estimated cost of £30 per family was felt to be too heavy, with the result that no more was done.<sup>2</sup> We recollect that the scheme of Marshal Balbo for the settlement of Italian colonists in Libya was estimated to cost the Government £2,000 for every family. If Italy could contemplate the expenditure of such sums as eventually profitable, surely it would be worth the while of the Imperial Government to be generous to Jamaica when so much is less needed . . . the recent grant shows a welcome change of policy.

There is one island in the Caribbean Gulf whose history, even if at all familiar to English readers, is soon forgotten or overlooked. In the western part of the island once known as San Domingo (or La Española, as Columbus called it) is one of the few independent negro States—Haiti, an old Carib name. For nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Jamaica*, Olivier, pp. 272-4, 311 ff; Cd. 6070, p. 149. The Barbados Settlement lost £7,000 in its activities during 1940, the Government making a loan of £2,500. Some of its land at Fort Vieux was taken over for naval bases under the Anglo-American agreement, and the settlement has since been abandoned.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, p. 81.



130 years it was a French colony, producing an almost unending stream of sugar, under the cruel but efficient supervision of its masters, whose industry, command of larger plantations, and irrigation system enabled them to get from their soil a yield three times as heavy as that of Jamaica,<sup>1</sup> but it also produced so violent a reaction against the French landowners that after an epic struggle, in which Spaniards and British also took a disastrous part, the negroes, inspired by Toussaint L'ouverture, Dessalines and Christophe, finally expelled the whites and, under the last, a pure-blooded African of servile birth, founded a regime which, though tottering on occasion, has managed to survive the jealousies and prejudices of more powerful neighbours until now. Christophe was a man of genius, measured by the standards of any race, and in his grand schemes of organization, education, or even of building can be seen the possibilities of his colour; the slaves of Haiti were free in 1804—two generations before those of America—and in the defiant words of his Constitution can be read the determination of the people and their King never to submit to the old slavery again. "No white of whatever nation shall set foot in this territory nor hereafter acquire any property here."<sup>2</sup> The latter clause was not modified until 1918, when foreign residents and associations were allowed to operate, under stringent safeguards to prevent them from becoming too influential, but in 1936 most foreign shopkeepers were compelled to leave the island; in addition, an occupational tax is now levied on foreigners.<sup>3</sup>

Haiti is, on the whole, an island of small cultivators, many of them owning their own land, and others on a variety of *metayage*, by which a certain proportion of the produce is paid to the landowner. Christophe himself was anxious to undo the effects of the French occupation by dividing up the big estates, and he settled thousands of his soldiers on small-holdings amounting to many thousands of acres in West Haiti, where their descendants now help to produce that coffee which is the country's most valuable export. He had much to struggle against, as his country still has amid the economic conflicts of the age, when American banks and Japanese silk and textile houses compete for the possession of Haiti's life. It was in 1915 that "dollar diplomacy" worked its will, by calling in American marines to look after the interests of the National City Bank, on the time-honoured plea that government was breaking down and American lives and property were no longer safe, even though in 100 years of Haitian independence no American had lost his life in internal disorder.<sup>4</sup> The Haitians,

<sup>1</sup> *Short History of British Expansion*, Williamson, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Haiti*, Steedman, p. 111; see also *The Black Jacobins*, James, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> Gruening, *Foreign Affairs*, January 1933.

like the "méchant animal" of the fable, defended themselves, and during the occupation lost 3,000, many of them unarmed; as a result they were bound economically to the American banks, just as San Domingo had been in thrall since 1892 to the Santo Domingo Improvement Society, which compelled the Dominican President in 1900 to hand over to it the collection of all customs dues. An American Commissioner, with the "moral" support of U.S. guns, sat in power till 1929, when indignation and resentment mounted to such heights that the Forbes Commission reported to President Hoover that the effort to turn Haiti into what was practically an American dependency would be shipwrecked on the hostility of the inhabitants, and it recommended withdrawal by 1936. Resisting fiercely a further attempt to dominate its financial life, Haiti in 1934 succeeded in getting the United States to withdraw practically all its officials and allow its own National Bank to function independently.

Among the spectators of the American occupation of Haiti was the well-known Negro writer and politician, James Weldon Johnson, who in his autobiography *Along this Way* describes the influence that his visit had on him at this time.<sup>1</sup> It dawned on him that the efforts which Haiti had so successfully made to gain its independence had effected a more complete social revolution in the lives of those who had been black slaves than had the Civil War in the Southern States, where the negro was still without real education, a satisfactory home, or anything like economic security, while in Haiti large plantations had been broken up and cultivated by independent farmers. The native social life of the educated citizens in the capital, Port-au-Prince, both in wealth and culture, reached a level which surpassed that of coloured people in any United States city. It was bound to provoke jealousy, as one outspoken American declared, "The trouble with Haiti is that these niggers down here with a little money and education think they are as good as we are". It must indeed have come as a shock to many of them to find that there was at least one country in the world where black ruled white. Nor had Haiti shown itself ungenerous to others struggling for their liberty, for not many years after it became free it offered refuge to Simon Bolivar, and when in 1816 he set out to rescue Venezuela from the Spaniards, it aided his enterprise with guns and stores.

Not that Haiti is without its serious problems, internal as well as external. There undoubtedly exists a vast and threatening fissure between the classes,<sup>2</sup> based both on racial distinctions and economic success—between the blacks and the mulattoes, be-

<sup>1</sup> *Along this Way*, Penguin edition, pp. 171-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Haiti*, Steedman, p. 252.

tween the urban and the rural populations, between those who are proud of, and those ashamed of, their African descent. Some, educated in the United States or in Paris, would turn their country into a replica, necessarily inferior, of those two places, while some, resentful of the treatment that their land, or themselves personally, have received, would carry back with them the virulent infection of the racial prejudices which find expression in the biased judgments of some of their courts.<sup>1</sup> While excellent facilities exist for upper-class education in the old tradition, the mass of the population has to be content with nothing but the barest elementary instruction,<sup>2</sup> and in spite of gallant efforts on the part of the Government, including travelling clinics, not much headway is being made against serious endemic diseases. As so often happens where an educational system is not closely related to the everyday life and requirements of the bulk of the population, we find a plethora of lawyers and journalists who live in a world of their own, dependent on the whirligig of politics, now in, now out of, office. To slaves newly freed nothing is usually more distasteful than manual work reminding them of their former status, and that evil tradition persists in Haiti.

Haiti, however, is in far better case than Liberia. This State, founded, as its name implies, for freed slaves, in 1822, has been termed "one of the most deplorable experiments in a purely African government".<sup>3</sup> A population of about 2,000,000 and a country 40,000 square miles in area, practically as big as Newfoundland, is controlled in the interests of some 10,000 negroes of American birth—and of the Firestone Rubber Company, whose plantations extend over 1,000,000 acres, at a rental of 6 cents an acre; having got the concession, Firestone reduced the acreage to 50,000, and cut the daily wages of workers from 1s. to 6d. during the depression of 1926 onwards, when rubber fell from 72 to 5 cents a pound.<sup>4</sup> A chronic inefficiency and lethargy hang like a pall over the country; the relations between the coastal government and the inland tribes are nearly always hostile, for the Krus naturally object to any activity which may bring them within the taxation clutches of a Government which remains indifferent to their welfare. Occasionally civil war bursts out, as in 1932, when the League Commissioner, Dr. Mackenzie, succeeded in bringing about an uneasy peace. It was American support which in 1847 was mainly responsible for the permanent establishment of

<sup>1</sup> *Haiti*, Steedman, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Even after 13 years of American effort, only 82,000 children attended school, out of 400,000 estimated to be of school age (Streit, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1928).

<sup>3</sup> *The Round Table*, December 1918.

<sup>4</sup> "Liberia", DuBois, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1933.

Liberia, but its interest soon waned until about 1909, when a Roosevelt Commission was active, and American business interests, which incidentally now have a private wireless station there, began to take notice of the depressing state of the country. There is now an American Controller of Customs, as well as agricultural and military experts at work, while a large American loan has been negotiated by the Finance Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

An amusing fact has been related, which illustrates the political morality of Liberian government. In the elections of 1927, when the outgoing President was maintained in office, it was found that he was re-elected by a majority of 125,000 votes, out of 6,000 eligible voters! There is, however, a much more sinister aspect of Liberian backwardness, especially in health services, for the medical investigations of the Rockefeller Foundation have shown that Liberia is almost a permanent reservoir for yellow fever, which, carried by mosquitoes, spreads naturally to adjacent lands. The majority of children seem to suffer from it, though with a surprisingly low mortality rate.<sup>2</sup> Liberia, then, one would imagine, was a place to be avoided, especially by those who have known the efforts of white doctors to improve the health and living conditions of a country subject to malaria and yellow fever, but it is a fact vouched for, that though Sierra Leone, which lies next door to Liberia, has been British for well over 150 years, and has certainly a better bill of health, there is no movement away from Liberia into Sierra Leone—indeed, any migration which takes place is in the other direction.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps we have rated too highly the gifts we have brought to West Africa—is it still another case of "*timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*"?

The conditions and fortunes of Liberia invite comparison with those of the only other African State which had managed to retain its independence for any considerable time—Abyssinia. Its recent history is all too familiar, but its present position is likely to prove even more interesting than its past, for it will almost certainly prove the touchstone by which to judge the genuineness and sincerity of the declarations made by the British Government that its full freedom will be restored. Here is almost a classic example of a country which attracts attention—not altogether disinterested—from Western Powers. It is large and supports a population bigger than that of Canada; it is reputed to contain vast supplies of minerals, even though a certain amount of prospecting has failed to locate them properly and no adequate survey has been made;

<sup>1</sup> On a previous loan Liberia was estimated to have paid interest at 17% (DuBois).

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1127.

<sup>3</sup> *African Dilemma*, Melland and Young (U.S.C.L., 1937).

there is good agricultural land, only awaiting, so the theory goes, careful exploitation. Strategically, it has proved of immense importance; politically, it was, prior to 1935, very unsettled, an agglomeration of many tribes under the leadership of the Amhara, themselves ruled by a competent and at times ruthless Emperor who, while endeavouring to westernize his country, had some idea of the dangers that he ran from acquisitive neighbours. But his writ did not run throughout the whole territory, for the Danakil tribes, for instance, were constantly breaking out into forays against Italian and British territory. Moreover, the dreadful crime of slavery still remained a blot—or even as the pretext for a crusade to be conducted by warm-hearted humanitarians, who, having put right all the social wrongs in their own countries, were for extending the blessings of civilization to the backward Ethiopian. And Haile Selassie himself was only a usurper, so they said—one who had been Regent, and, having ousted the legitimate ruler, proclaimed himself Emperor.

Now the Italian conqueror has been driven out. What will be Ethiopia's status? Can she at once be left to fend for herself in a world at war? Can the old system be retained by which 2,000,000 Amhara controlled the central government rather at the expense of the other tribes? If control by outside Powers is continued, how long will it last? Will Egypt's fate be repeated at the other end of the Nile? What will the Emperor think, if he sees his foreign advisers gradually transforming themselves into Political Officers or Residents, as they did in Haiti, making and unmaking his governments and diverting the natural wealth of his country to channels profitable to theirs, by concessions, loans and the hundred devices known to "scalp-hunters" of that type? For as the fate of Ethiopia reacted tremendously on black peoples throughout the world, and proved a bitter blow to the pride they felt in the independence of a coloured—though certainly not an exclusively negro—State, so its *risorgimento* will be watched with equally anxious eyes by millions, even outside Africa, who will pass judgment once again on the white race according to the issue. It will not be altogether easy to control the transition from war to peace; it will be supremely worth the effort to effect it with justice, even if that means foregoing a tempting prize.

After the final defeat of the Italians, Ethiopia remained for some time under the control of the British War Office, until a more permanent arrangement could be negotiated and so settle the many problems created by foreign usurpation and its overthrow. It was during this interim period, which was prolonged to a suspicious length, that various surmises were made that parts of Ethiopia were to be removed from the Emperor's control,

especially the Ogaden and the Boran. Eventually, on February 4th 1942, Mr. Eden announced that a formal treaty had been signed recognizing the Emperor as the lawful sovereign and making such arrangements as were necessary for the difficult times through which the country was bound to pass. Haile Selassie asked for advisers to assist him in the reorganization of the army, police and magistrature, and undertook to conform his own military operations to those of the British. Two small strips of country (one the Ogaden) were to be retained for convenience under British military administration, but eventually would come under the Emperor's jurisdiction. These and several other details having to do with Italian prisoners and so-called "rights" were accompanied by a grant from the British Government of £2,500,000, covering a period of two years, to be followed by further sums, tapering from £1,500,000 in the first year to £250,000 in the fourth year, if found necessary.

This agreement met with general approval, for it was felt to be a fair and reasonable arrangement for a country in a peculiar and, indeed, critical state. The social reforms which Haile Selassie had contemplated before his exile included the abolition of slavery, a project which on his return he reaffirmed, even though it ran counter to the interests of the nobility and priesthood, who together had lived on the labour of a tribute-paying peasantry. The country had no proper budgetary system, the equipment of the army and the organization of justice being paid for by the Emperor's privy purse, as was the custom in mediaeval England. Education had been the monopoly of the Coptic priesthood, against whom the Italians vigorously strove in the interests of Roman Catholicism. The general level of health and well-being was desperately low. Ethiopia, then, needs a vast overhaul; even in war-time it might have been too easy a step for Britain to continue occupation on the pretext of helping the Emperor to bring order out of chaos. Fortunately she has not fallen to the major temptation, though much will yet depend on the advisers who undertake the direction of the various departments. These are to be the Emperor's servants, not the nominees of Britain at his Court, but it would have been an act of political courage to have invited some non-British national—some citizen of Sweden or Switzerland—to share in the work of re-organization. There is, also, some difficulty in reinstating a country in its independence while at the same time granting it financial subsidies accompanied by military help and advisers—the two seem incompatible, and, by their very nature, to compromise the liberty thus restored. In this case the financial help represents to Britain the cost of an hour or two's war-time expenditure; it might even be criticised as

niggardly, but Mr. Eden was right in so limiting it; as he himself said, "The financial arrangements have been designed to ensure that the dependence of Ethiopia upon a foreign country shall not be perpetuated."

Ethiopia has been used as a link between the West Indies, with which we opened this chapter, and the East, or, more particularly, those parts which are collectively known as Malaya, for Ethiopia may even yet fall victim to certain ambitions, as did those States, Federated and Unfederated, which are so productive and profitable today. The way in which it was done has been well described by one who became High Commissioner; in his book on *British Malaya*, Sir Frank Swettenham wrote: "The Malay States were, at first, only places whose nominal rulers had so failed to keep their houses in order that their unruly subjects had become a danger to neighbouring British Settlements, and for the safety of the Settlements, the Queen's government sent 'advisers' to strengthen the hands of the Malay chiefs and assist them in establishing peace and good government. Of course the Malay States were not British possessions and could not be so treated; but as matters settled down and the States began to prosper, they required many servants and much material which could best be supplied from England."<sup>1</sup>

The process of absorption which brought the Malay peninsula under British control lasted from August 1786, when Penang was acquired, until 1888, when Pahang became a Protectorate; 8 years later a federation for administrative purposes gave them the name they now bear, while the other four native principalities, already economically dependent on British territory and manacled by concessions rashly granted, "accepted" British protection between 1905 and 1910, and, though nominally independent, had a British supervisory official at the Court of their respective Sultans, who lost practically all political power in their territories. The total area of these lands—the Straits Settlement, the Federated and the Unfederated States—comes to over 51,000 square miles, with a population, based on the 1931 census and subsequent statistics, of about 5,279,000, so that compared with other parts of the East Indies they are not overcrowded. Java, for instance, and Madura, with an area almost the same, support nearly 42,000,000, with an average density of 818 to the square mile. The population is far from homogeneous, for while the Malays number over 2,000,000, there are 2,220,000 Chinese and 755,000 Indians, as well as a handful of 25,000 Europeans, apart from military personnel. Actually the Malays are declining relative to the total population—in 1911, 53%; 1921, 49.2%; 1931,

<sup>1</sup> *British Malaya*, p. 280; quoted from *British Imperialism in Malaya*, p. 9.

45%. To the Chinese is due the early development of the tin-mining industry, a large portion of which is still under Chinese management,<sup>1</sup> while at the same time they conduct most of the retail business and supply most of the artisans. Not unnaturally, they are regarded with some dismay by the natives, but as the interests of the two races lie apart—that of the Malay in agriculture, of the Chinese in industry and commerce—the latter have less to fear than from the jealousy and suspicion of the Europeans, who somewhat too readily have been prone to raise the cry that the Chinese “were exploiting the native population”.

The Indians have come mainly from two areas: the south or Tamil-speaking parts, and from the Punjab. The Sikhs—one might almost call them “of the Dispersion”—are to be found in Malaya, in nearly every port and settlement in China, in the Philippines and as far off as Hawaii, while some have travelled to the American coast, and to these two groups is due the development of the rubber plantation system, for which they supplied three-quarters of the labour on estates over 100 acres, since the Malay was content with his small, garden-like patch.

On these two commodities, tin and rubber, the prosperity of Malaya depends. The story has often been told how in 1877 there was smuggled from the Amazon basin a cargo of seeds, which, transplanted to Kew and there reared, formed the basis of the vast rubber industry, on plantations, supplying nearly half the world's consumption, and as this reached the huge total of 1,054,850 tons in 1940, and for 1941 is estimated at 1,600,000 tons, we can well appreciate the part played by plantation rubber in the economy of the States, and its importance to investors who have sunk probably £120,000,000 in it, to which we may add the £80,000,000, mainly British and Dutch, which are invested in the same industry in the Netherlands East Indies. Rubber has known more ups and downs in price levels than probably any other commodity, both over long and short periods: in 1910 it fluctuated between 12s. 9d. and 5s. 3d. per lb.; the nadir was reached in 1922, at 6½d., a crisis for capitalist production, which could only suggest restriction of output as a cure, irrespective of the destruction of wealth, the unemployment both in Malaya and in manufacturing countries which it entailed, and human misery in Britain, India—almost the world over. The Stevenson scheme of 1922–8, which brought some considerable prosperity to the big companies at the expense of the natives, both labourers and small-holders, had to be repeated a few years later, when the depression of 1930 (rubber

<sup>1</sup> In 1931 there were forty-eight European mine-owners and managers to 214 Chinese, and no Indians. 70,000 of about 75,000 labourers were Chinese (*ABC of the Pacific*, Woodman, p. 78).



in London cost  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  per lb. in 1932)<sup>1</sup> onwards revealed the bankruptcy, moral and economic, of such temporary palliatives. At one time the output was restricted to 50% of its possible, in 1939 it was 58 $\frac{3}{4}$ % for export purposes, in 1940 the quota had risen to 83 $\frac{3}{4}$ %, while now, under press of war-time demands, it has risen to 100%, and for the last quarter of 1941 and 1942 to 120%. Prices, too, have shown the same unevenness; in 1939 the average was 8 $\frac{1}{8}d.$  per lb.; in 1940 1s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}d.$ , while in August 1941, 1s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}d.$  was being paid.

How have the companies fared recently, before the Japanese invasion? There is no doubt that they benefited from the situation during the first two years of the war, for even a casual search of company reports will show that the majority were able to pay substantially increased dividends, in some cases doubling their rates, at the same time carrying forward substantial sums to reserve, and paying vastly increased amounts in Excess Profits Tax; and as long as the war lasted there was likely to be an equal or even greater demand—in the case of the Dunlop Plantations, for example, this has already enabled them to wipe out in 1940 a deficit brought forward from the previous year, and to repay part of the guaranteed dividend met by Dunlop Rubber in the past. Another company can pay 25% after meeting retrospective taxation, another sees its profits increase from £38,272 to £79,392, another from £58,369 to £121,856, and from £94,143 to £162,048—or on a smaller scale from £2,185 to £6,485. They were, in fact, on the crest of the wave so far as prosperity is concerned, and their position was due to war conditions, for in peace times it may well be threatened by synthetic and artificial products, such as Buna, Ameripol, and Neoprene, which have partly owed their development to war aims, and which may be able to compete on quite equal terms with the natural product. It is hoped to step up the production of the American product, first to 120,000 tons, and then to 400,000 tons every year. The Malay Companies' fortunes, as is inevitable, were also due to the low rates of pay which their employees received.

As we have seen, a great deal of labour in both the staple industries is provided by Chinese or by Tamils and Klings from Southern India. The former generally possess more energy and initiative, and their reward is slightly greater, varying a little from State to State. In 1930 Chinese labour was paid 40 cents a day for males in Selangor, and 32 for female, while in Pahang it was 47 and 37. These rates remained fairly constant until 1938, by which time the Chinese were receiving from 60 to 65 cents daily. The Malayan dollar is worth 2s. 4d.; 1s. 5d. or 1s. 6d. hardly seems

<sup>1</sup> *British Rule in Eastern Asia*, Mills, p. 201.

adequate return, especially as the rise in prices had been general, and increased by the presence of large military forces in the country—an experience shared by the West Indies: here a mild form of inflation<sup>1</sup> has set in owing to the construction work on the American naval bases, one result of which has been the disappearance from the ordinary market of chickens and eggs, and a rise in rents felt by the agricultural labourers and middle classes, who are not directly benefited by the extra work provided. The wage rates for Indians on the Malayan Plantations had actually gone down—previous to 1938 they were receiving 50 and 40 cents respectively for men and women, but subsequently only 45 and 35, for a local maximum working day of nine hours.<sup>2</sup>

Continued protests by both Chinese and Indian labourers were made, with little effect; Trade Union organization is still in its infancy in Malaya, where Unions are liable to get entangled with the secret societies which are a tradition in those States, naturally unwelcome to the authorities, who have used the weapon of registration against certain associations by refusing to register them and then treating them under the Enactment as subversive bodies. Nor is peaceful picketing—an essential Trade Union right—allowed.<sup>3</sup> Thus the only weapon left to the dissatisfied working-man becomes the mass protest, and eventually violence, leading to collisions with the police. From December 1940 to May 1941 there was a succession of disturbances affecting both Chinese and Indians, in Selangor and Negri Sembilan, accompanied by fatal casualties, on the Dunlop and other estates, outbreaks in which the High Commissioner saw the dire work of “propaganda”, especially in the Central Indian Association of Malaya, one of whose leaders was arrested and banished. It would be much simpler to look for an explanation in the ordinary terms of economics, and to recognize, as the authorities probably did, that labour conditions were bad, for they sent out the Colonial Labour Adviser, Orde Brown, to report on the situation as he found it.

The substantial prosperity which was evident in Malaya enabled the Government to make considerable payments to Britain for war purposes—a form of tribute which the Colonial Office, to its credit, is now discouraging—and also to make greatly increased provision for local defence, but it did not make the Legislatures any more ready to submit to the imposition of an Income Tax.

<sup>1</sup> League of Coloured Peoples, *Newsletter*, November 1941, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Federated Malay States, *Annual Report*, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> Fabian Colonial Bureau, Memorandum on *Trade Unionism in the Colonies*, August 1941.

In the war of 1914-18, three years elapsed before Income Tax was established, and then much evasion was practised until its abolition in 1922.<sup>1</sup> Under the Special War Tax Act of 1941, a graduated scale of taxation was at last proposed, but the levy was small and the rise very gradual; it was certainly an unwelcome innovation, for in one of the territories no such tax had previously been levied, and in another 20 years had elapsed since any similar form of taxation had been experienced. The local pundits argued that it was unsuitable for local conditions, but even they could hardly claim that the rates were excessive compared with those in Britain. Incomes under £560 (modified later to £435) were exempt, those up to £720 paid 2%, ascending by small graduations till those with £2,330 a year were liable to tax at 8%. The first year's estimated yield was £940,000. There had been much the same sort of outcry, though far more clamant and bitter, in Kenya, when from 1932 onwards an income-tax had been proposed to meet the budget deficits which had grown so alarmingly, deficits due to certain features of the Protection Policy, to an inherent financial instability and to the growth of a large governmental machine, but it was nothing less than blind prejudice and the most conspicuous display of racial antipathy that animated the settler population in their largely successful struggle both with the Colonial Governor and the Colonial Office.<sup>2</sup> The whole problem of taxation throughout the Colonies is an extremely intricate one, so dependent on local conditions and economics, as well as on the presence or absence of racial antagonisms, for it has been seen over and over again how the presence of even a small resident European community is responsible for an all-round increase in Government expenditure, often largely for the benefit of Europeans, but one which they are reluctant to meet.<sup>3</sup> Thus between 1925 and 1935 the cost of pensions in Malaya rose from \$2,307,346 to \$5,960,005. Sir Donald Cameron in Tanganyika found that in 1925 more public money was spent on the Governor's establishment than on the education of the whole Mandate, European, native, and Indian.<sup>4</sup> Income-tax on Europeans generally yields comparatively little except in such areas as Malaya or in mineral-bearing territories, and even when levied we have seen how comparatively light the burden is—in Barbados, incomes up to £500 pay 3d. in the pound, after which they are graded till the maximum rate levied is 3s. for incomes over £1,500:

<sup>1</sup> *British Rule in Eastern Asia*, Mills, pp. 27 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *British Policy in Kenya Colony*, Dilley, pp. 105-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Financial and Economic History of African Tropical Territories*, Pim, p. 203; *British Rule in Eastern Asia*, Mills, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> *My Tanganyika Service*, p. 127.

in Palestine the exemption limit is £400 for married people and the rate 5% for the first £400, 7½% for the next, so that an income of £1,000 pays £35, and only 7,000 of a population of 1½ millions will pay tax at all; in the West Indies the percentage of Revenue raised by Income Tax in 1936 was 5%, the comparable figure for the United Kingdom being 35%. In South Africa, an income of £500, paying in England £72 3s. 9d., gets off with £14 11s., one of £1,000 pays £59 3s. 3d. compared with £244 13s. in this country.<sup>1</sup>

If we divide the Colonial Empire into sections, as we did in comparing medical and educational services, we can see what proportion of total revenue is derived from direct taxation of the native, always remembering that import duties are very heavy, in the extreme case of British Guiana adding 25% to the price of imported goods, so that while we can estimate direct taxation, the burden imposed by indirect, mainly on food and clothing, cannot even be guessed at, while the most striking anomalies occur—Kenya native taxation is a third as heavy again as in Tanganyika, and four times as heavy as in Nigeria. These are the figures for 1937-38:<sup>2</sup>

East Africa . . . . .	22.9%
South African Dependencies . . . . .	10.02
West Africa . . . . .	8.8
Eastern Dependencies . . . . .	0.14
West Indies . . . . .	Nil
Pacific Dependencies . . . . .	1.89

The economic position of Malaya was thus a happy one from the entrepreneur's point of view, and if developments now only in their infancy can be encouraged after the war, there is every likelihood that both the Malay States and the Dutch East Indies will prove even wealthier in the future than in the past, for in the Dutch possessions especially, science has been called in to the exploitation of natural resources, with amazing results, as also to securing better health for the inhabitants, whose death rate was as low as 20 per 1,000. The sugar industry of Java is probably the most efficient in the world,<sup>3</sup> the palm-oil industry of Sumatra, an island which has been called less Dutch than international, is now becoming a very serious rival to the apparently once impregnable position of Nigeria, with the ironic fact that the trees which now produce both oil and kernel are descendants of those once transplanted from West Africa and improved by the care of scientifically trained experts. Like rubber, the palm-oil and kernel industry is now practically a plantation monopoly, and great care is taken

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Parliaments of Empire*, Vol. XXII, July 3rd, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *The Economist*, August 9th, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> *Netherlands Overseas Territories*, R.I.I.A., p. 57.

with the extraction processes which result in a higher-quality oil, with a proportion of oil from kernel much higher than that in Nigeria, at a price which may run the African product off the market, for it has been shown that where the price of Nigerian oil falls below £16 per ton, export from native-grown trees contracts, while under Malayan conditions oil can be produced at £10 9s. per ton, and kernels at £4 10s.<sup>1</sup> Similarly Dutch estates produced rubber for 4d. to 5d. per lb., while the British figure was 7d. to 9d.<sup>2</sup> The West African Colonies cannot afford to see their palm-oil industry fade away, as they have already seen their wild-rubber plantations ruined by reckless exploitation and completely wasted by the profit-snatching methods employed by the concession companies, who in the last twenty years of the 19th century succeeded in completely spoiling a most valuable natural resource which it has proved impossible to replace.

On the whole, the impact which Western civilization and economy has made upon Malaya has been less productive of evil than in almost any other area—much less, for instance, than in Africa, where disintegration has been the result of such innovations as contract labour, a money currency, wages for work, compulsory service and similar features; but this has been partly because the majority of the labouring classes are not Malayan and indigenous, but foreign and immigrant, and immigration in itself implies a breaking-up of a settled way of life. The Malay is himself comparatively little disturbed in his traditional ways (only 11% live in urban areas), but he cannot help wondering how it is that riches which he sees his own country produce do not come his way. Another suggested reason is that the paramount power has adapted the Malay's own native social and political organization to serve imperial ends, but using its substance to carry out exactly what it wishes, without doing too violent injury to Malayan pride. How long this will continue it is impossible to say, but recent events in Europe are bound to have their repercussions in the East Indies, while the policy of Japan adds one more uncertainty to the scene, for the future of Malaya is bound up largely with the fate of the Dutch possessions.

The German occupation of Holland had an immediate effect in the Western Pacific, for it meant that the Netherlands Indies could exercise a greater degree of independence than had hitherto been possible, and it brought into certain prominence a rather veiled struggle which had been going on for some time between various sections of the population, particularly the Indo-Europeans, whose European paternity had given them position and influence

<sup>1</sup> *Financial and Economic History of African Tropical Territories*, Pim, pp. 75–6.

<sup>2</sup> *British Rule in Eastern Asia*, Mills, p. 201

out of all proportion to their numbers, and the increasingly active and nationalist Indonesians, whose education and growing wealth prompted them to claim a greater share in the Government than had been previously allowed them, and with them was allied a considerable Chinese party. Self-preservation and a sense of superiority tended to align the Indo-Europeans with the island Government, but the growing competition of their rivals, together with their dissatisfaction at the official policy, which, in its efforts to keep the land as much as possible in native hands, forbade them to acquire it in perpetuity, had been pushing them into marked criticism of the Government, from whom, in its now more precarious situation, they hoped to extort some concessions, especially in the matter of land acquisition.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese threat prior to the invasion rather calmed them, but, on the other hand, the Indonesians, in some respects like certain elements in the Indian Congress, have not been so apprehensive of Japanese advances as we have, for there is naturally quite a strong appeal in the idea of "Asia for the Asiatics", and the sight of an Asiatic nation bearding the Western world, as Japan did to Russia in 1905 and has been doing ever since, struck the Indonesians as not perhaps so insufferable as it did us. The British public itself had rather a shock when it found that the Prime Minister of Burma, immediately after a disappointing visit to this country, was interned because of his contacts with the Japanese—he did, in fact, hope that he could do more for his people by making a deal with the Japanese than by continuing to expect concessions from a procrastinating and apparently reluctant British Government. There is, however, another element to complicate the plot—the Chinese, who in their new homes in the Pacific islands have shown themselves most enthusiastic supporters of the national movement in their own country, to which they have sent large sums of money for the cause; they at least, one might think, would not calmly see Japanese ambitions fulfilled in the Indies.

The Dutch Government had always been aware of these tendencies, pulling in different directions; it had to face, in 1926-27, serious Communist outbreaks, which, strangely enough, produced far more casualties among the natives than Europeans, only one of whom, for instance, was killed in the 1926 outbreak, but very wisely it then disregarded the advice of its die-hard friends, and allowed both nationalists and Communists a considerable degree of latitude, at least in speech, so as not to make martyrs of them.<sup>2</sup> For many years it had followed a policy of direct rule for the

<sup>1</sup> *Asia*, March 1941, article by A. Vanderbosch.

<sup>2</sup> "Dutch Rule in East Indies", M. W. F. Treub, *Foreign Affairs*, January 8th, 1930.

majority of the islands, but from 1903 onwards it decentralized administration, using the village *desa* as the basis—a council presided over by a headman, chosen by the village and invested with judicial as well as administrative powers. This system worked quite well, though it could not satisfy the more highly educated among the native intelligentsia, whose political ambitions, both in the country and at the centre, had been stimulated by the very sound educational system which the Dutch built up.

The Singapore naval base *appeared* to offer some protection to the Dutch overseas territories, while the interest of the United States in maintaining the integrity of that empire quickened the sense of confidence that the Japanese would not be able to coerce the Indies into joining their Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Scheme, an ambition which they might have fulfilled even more easily had they acted in the East at the same time as their Axis partner did in the West.

Now that they have overrun both the Dutch possessions and Malaya, the Japanese will have an interesting problem to face in their relations with the extensive Arab colonies which have long been settled in Java and in Singapore. These have kept up a close and intimate contact with their homeland, for the majority of them the Hadhramaut, to which they often retire and always send considerable remittances. The commercial acumen of these Arabs is very considerable. Emigrating from their turbulent country, they usually accepted small positions as clerks and traders, and, by patient accumulation, in a generation or two became possessors of very large properties. Constant immigration kept up their numbers, the majority going to Java, where there are now about 80,000 of them, mainly occupied in the production of batik and sarongs. In Singapore there is a small but extremely wealthy community, one of its families owners of property worth £2,000,000, with as much again in Java. Several of them were Justices of the Peace for Singapore. On their return to Southern Arabia they took with them many of the habits and luxuries they had known in the East Indies, even to the extent of copying domestic architecture. How they will fare now, it is impossible to conjecture; the attitude of Germany and Italy towards Mohammedans has never been particularly happy—the treatment which the Eastern partners of the Axis accord to the Arabs there will have its repercussions far afield, and may influence for good or ill the internal politics of the Hadhrami tribes, and their relations with the Aden Protectorate, of which they form a very important part.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arabia and the Isles*, Ingrams, pp. 172, 187, 190, 207, etc.

## AUSTRALASIA

IF THE isolation of Africa from the main current of civilization was due to its climate and the fear which the unknown imposed upon the less intrepid, that of Australia was due in large degree to the distance which separated it from other centres of activity—and how much more effective this has been we can see from the strange biological survivals which have marked the continent out as a museum of zoology, where antediluvian animals, and even human beings, may be studied, as in no other part of the world. It was, indeed, a new land to which the early explorers came, a vast and empty land, over whose millions of acres roamed a small handful of queer black men, relics of a bygone age. Who they were, to whom they were related, are not fully determined; a smooth-haired race, they were possibly allied to the Dravidians of Southern India, whose similar fate it was to have been driven before an alien and more energetic people. In 1788 there may have been 300,000 of them, though some estimates give a considerably smaller figure; today that number has shrunk to a quarter of the higher estimate—a mere 77,000, of whom not more than 54,000 are full bloods.<sup>1</sup> Their whole outlook, when first the white man came into contact with them, was akin to that of the New Stone Age, their mentality extremely primitive, their cultural and scientific achievements nil; consequently the early visitors to the continent, unable to appreciate the very difficult environment in which they lived, formed a highly unfavourable opinion of them. Dampier, for instance, classed them as little above animals, and was perhaps responsible for a tradition of denigration which neither the testimony of missionaries nor the still more disinterested descriptions of famous explorers (Eyre, Sturt, Kennedy, Burke, Wills) have been able to wipe out. On their own ground they are superlative in bushcraft, fair treatment brings out fine qualities, peaceable and honest when given a square deal—but this is just what was withheld from them, for their hunting-grounds and water-holes impinged upon the ranges of the boundary riders and shepherds, who treated them with cruelty, and added to their brutality the introduction of drink and disease, which began that process of semi-extinction. In the introduction to an interesting novel, *The Timeless Land*, which deals with the early contacts between the Australian natives and the founders of Sydney, the authoress, Eleanor Dark, writes, "The Australian Aboriginal had great virtues; in a fairly extensive reading I have

<sup>1</sup> *Australian Native Policy*, Foxcroft (Melbourne U. P., 1941), pp. 14 ff.



been able to discover no vices save those which they learned from the white invaders of their land. Some of their customs seem cruel to us. Some of ours, such as flogging, horrified them. The race is nearly gone and with it will go something which the 'civilized' world has scorned too easily.'

It was not that efforts were not made on their behalf. Governors and missionaries, as early as 1800, interested themselves in problems of settlement and education, often far in advance of public feeling, which had but the lowest opinion of the "black fellows", and was content that they should die out as quickly as possible, since they seemed already well on the way to disappearance, but their efforts, while well-meaning, were ineffective, and in some cases positively harmful, because they were based on faulty or inaccurate knowledge. Then, too, the vast size of the area over which they wandered made it difficult to stop, and to punish, such atrocities as the Myall Creek Massacre in 1838—even today it is sometimes a serious obstacle in the way of swift justice; in 1941<sup>1</sup> it was stated that an aborigine had been murdered by two Europeans in a district in Northern Territory, well over 200 miles from the nearest police constable, and 1,000 miles from Darwin. From 1844, when South Australia made an ordinance, a series of measures was passed for their protection, mainly by allocating to them reserves which should have been adequate in size, though the nomadic character and way of life of the majority made a large allotment necessary. Different States unfortunately adopted somewhat different policies, at widely differing dates, New South Wales having no real native policy for a century after its settlement, with the result that their numbers dwindled from an estimated 40,000 in 1788 to only 869 full-bloods in 1936,<sup>2</sup> but with a Western Australia and Federal Reserve of 63,000 square miles, and one in Queensland of 6,000,000 acres with nearly 1,000 miles of coastline, as well as a considerable expenditure, there has been a general improvement in the morale of the aborigine, and a growing interest—or even a quickening of the public conscience over them, though the possibility exists that the natives will have disappeared before the policy is effective!

While the problems are not really comparable with those of Africa, there are much the same gradations between the primitive nomads, the half-detribalized threatened by white settlement, the half-caste group, as well as remote pockets, such as the inhabitants of the islands of the Torres Straits; and the same diversity of views is found on how best to treat each of these groups: the anthropologist would preserve the tribal system as completely as possible,

<sup>1</sup> League of Coloured Peoples, *Newsletter*, December 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *Australian Native Policy*, Foxcroft, pp. 30, 100.

the missionaries wish to substitute Christianity for tribal ritual, the pastoralists, many of them impoverished, look to them for cheap labour, especially in the Northern Territory, while the unionists wish them to be eligible for the same wage awards as the whites. Amidst this welter of competing interests some effort is being made to give them an education fitted to their environment; but, having neither legal nor constitutional rights, they are apt to be disregarded, while their poverty and general bewilderment in an alien world mean that neither economic nor social policy is fully bent to their development, or even preservation. Thus we see that in Queensland 75% of them are self-supporting and have vocational training, while Western Australia spends on its 22,047 full-bloods only half the amount that New South Wales now spends on 869! Indeed, compared with the financial provision which the United States makes for its Red Indians, Australia is decidedly parsimonious—the Indians, numbering over 234,000 on Federal Reserves, cost the U.S.A. £30 per head; Australian Federal Government spends £1 per head for those for whom it has responsibility, while over the whole continent the total State expenditure for 51,557 full-bloods and 25,712 half-castes is £164,727 (1935-6).<sup>1</sup>

Such has been the fate of the Australian aborigine, not perhaps so terrible as that of the Caribs at the hand of the Spaniards, though just as cruel, for to an era of cruelty succeeded one of disregard. What, then, of the white population of Australia? We have already seen that this numbers about 7,000,000, very unevenly spread, and dangerously concentrated into the large cities, two of which have well over 1,000,000 inhabitants each, while the total in the five largest comes to about 3,200,000—not far short of half of the whole; so that while Australia is a continent of vast spaces, it has largely an urban civilization and outlook, with the virtues, as well as the vices, of town-dwellers. The isolation which kept Australia a secret from the world for so many centuries is still a potent factor in moulding the policy and sentiments of its inhabitants. It has bred in them a self-consciousness which needs understanding and a feeling that they are exposed to dangers which are not always realized in Europe. The early discovery and rapid development of gold-mining led to the overriding influence in politics and social matters generally of the industrial workers, sometimes to the exclusion of the interests of the pastoralists; but this phase passed comparatively soon, though the development of war industries may once again tend to upset the balance. There is also a frontier tradition, not unlike that which has so much importance in American politics, marked by a similar stridency,

<sup>1</sup> *Australian Native Policy*, Foxcroft, p. 152.

and a concentration on personalities; it is vigorous, unsparing in its criticism, and unhampered by age-old considerations of social prestige, even if it is sometimes dictated by those of wealth.

More consciously, perhaps, than many other communities, Australian democracy has formulated certain aims which it is determined to realize, the foremost being the attainment of a high standard of living for all its citizens—an ambition which it was desperately hard to maintain during the years of depression and financial crisis.<sup>1</sup> Natural wealth, it felt, should be shared as equally as possible, and with it the achievement of a genuine equality of citizenship, in both social and politic life. To the Australian (as well as to the Canadian) the great extremes of wealth and poverty which he saw (and still sees) in Great Britain, with a caste system almost as rigid as that of India, were features of economic misorganization which he would never allow to be repeated and perpetuated in his own country. Now, these were ideals, and, like ideals generally, fell considerably short of realization, but they were ever present to the political mind of Australia, and dictated much of her labour policy and organization and governed her dealings with outside Powers, especially in the matter of immigration. The early vicissitudes of Australian settlement, and the determination to keep the continent a “white” preserve, made the Governments both of the constituent States, and eventually of the Commonwealth, extremely independent of the home Government, the other self-governing Dominions, and India.

This same determination, of course, animated the political leaders of South Africa, but for them it implied, and still implies, keeping in subjection for an unlimited period a large native population, superior in numbers, and yet essential for the whole economic structure of their country. They therefore rejected any policy which even faintly aimed at the assimilation into their system of the millions of Bantu or the thousands of Indians; so they were led to waver between repression and segregation, though sometimes they played with such specious terms as “parallel development”, at the same time being unwilling to pay the price in land or political partnership which such words entailed, if they were to mean anything at all. In Australia the aborigine had no part in the political, economic or social structure, so that the field was comparatively clear within her borders. But Nature abhors a vacuum, and it was only natural that vast unpopulated spaces, unfilled by the white man, should prove tempting to Chinese, Japanese, Indians and even some Southern

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, October 1925, April 1926, July 1927; also articles in *Round Table*, and *Cambridge History of British Empire*, Vol. VII, Part 1, pp. 166–502.

Europeans—perhaps it would be more true to say to the governing classes of some of these peoples who saw in them a potential home for their unsatisfied proletariat.

Naturally the Australians would have none of this, for in their eyes the conditions of life which obtained among, and were perforce tolerated by, Asiatics could not be acceptable to a society unwilling to see its general high standard of living depressed by emigrants who would undermine the foundations on which this life had been built. They feared, for example, the thrift and endurance of the Chinese. They felt, too, that a genuine equality was not possible if all classes and races were not up to the level of the highest in respect of political rights, education and participation in that form of political democracy, with its representative system, which they had inherited from Britain. They feared, also, the creation of minorities within their borders, looking for protection to some external Power, as the Indians in South Africa looked, even if sometimes to their own disadvantage, to the Government of India, while they were only too well aware of the problems created by a large half-caste population like the "Cape Coloured", moving uneasily and insecurely between black and white, with no real foothold in either camp, and a disintegrating element in the body politic. One code of laws and treatment was essential for the maintenance of their social fabric.

To a certain extent they were protected by their economic system and the conditions which had built it up, for the staple industries of Australia did not demand a large "servile" population; wool, wheat and butter do not require the masses of cheap labour which would justify the immigration of numbers of aliens to be employed under white overseers. There were two possible exceptions to this, in mining and tropical agriculture, but the field for the latter was comparatively limited, as we can see from a consideration of the area in which this could profitably be followed. Roughly speaking, 42% of the continent is arid, half this being useless for the raising of stock, and about half capable only of spare cultivation; 34% is good pastoral country, while 21% is suitable for temperate farming, a good deal of this being included in the northern mountains, while only 4—5% is available for tropical products, of which sugar is the most important. Thus natural conditions make Australia the most promising field now remaining for the settlement of white people, and the Australians are determined to keep it so, and choose by rigid discrimination the type of white people they want. They are not prepared, even if natural resources allowed, to make the gigantic experiment carried out by the United States of throwing open their country to large-scale immigration, comparable with that of the last

half of the 19th century. European immigrants came to America to find a better life, and while in many respects their culture and history differed to varying degrees from those of the land they were entering, they were not so entirely different as to bring about a struggle between one outlook and philosophy and another, or so incapable of fusion that tension between the two would become the unhappy and normal state of the community. The gigantic melting-pot could assimilate natives of every country in Europe, but even it would not take the risk with Orientals; Australia was not as venturesome as the States.

It had taken the early settlers in Australia a long time to live down the unhappy beginnings of their States from the days of transportation, and the fierce conflicts which they had with the Government of Great Britain over this very point were one of the reasons for the intense independence with which they demanded and maintained their political freedom. Having got rid of transportation, they were determined not to admit coolie labour, even if this meant an appreciable rise in the cost of labour, and therefore of services in the community; labour had to be white, and white it had to remain. But the staunchest of determinations cannot run counter to economic facts and developments, and it was these that nearly overthrew their loudly expressed resolutions.

The first of them was the discovery from 1850 onwards of gold, which brought a considerable influx of Chinese into Victoria, where they encountered much antipathy on all grounds, social, economic and racial, even though they preferred field work and engagements in the alluvial area of the gold-beds. It was the end of this latter period of mining and the necessity to dig deep into the earth which terminated their immigration, for the Chinese disliked this method. In 1855 there were 21,000 in Victoria, and though the number fell the next year, by 1859 it had risen to 42,000, in spite of many forms of discouragement put in their way—entrance tax, residence tax, passenger limitation, refusal of naturalization, discriminatory licence fees and the whole apparatus, dating from their first entrance to the eighties, during which decade their numbers in New South Wales amounted to 15% of the population,<sup>1</sup> and later, when these restrictions were extended to Orientals other than the Chinese. From 1891 economic conditions had ceased to make it profitable for them to come, and their numbers steadily dropped from 38,000 in that year to 20,000 in 1921. The danger that all good Australians felt threatening them was thus averted.

The next menace came from Queensland, where, in spite of the

<sup>1</sup> *Menace of Colour*, p. 154.

fall in the world price of sugar about the middle of the last century, the industry expanded because there was abundance both of virgin soil and cheap labour, as well as an advanced centralized milling system. Chinese and Indian labour was not employed because the authorities (and particularly the Government of India) demanded the enforcement of regulations which the planters considered too strict, so they turned their attention to the island-dotted South Seas, and drew Kanakas to labour for them. How they did it became one of the scandals of the times -- it was a trade which, as Bishop Pattison said, it was impossible to carry on honestly -- or downright slavery, according to another witness; nor were the horrors of the Middle Passage omitted, for the death-rate among healthy islanders recruited in the prime of life was in 1880 62.89 per 1,000, rising to 66 as the yearly average for the quinquennium 1885-90. The Kanakas did not come in their thousands, like the Chinese (in 1905 there were 8,450 in Queensland),<sup>1</sup> but before very long it was felt that they constituted an even graver threat to political democracy and the general level of life. They tended to spread to other pastoral work; in 1883 stricter regulation, confined their activities, in spite of the opposition of the planters and squatters, but with the ardent support of the artisan and labouring class, until the Commonwealth was successfully organized with Queensland as one of its constituent States. Even then the planters threatened that North Queensland would secede and become a separate State. However, from 1890 the trade in Kanakas was declared illegal, and their labour was completely withdrawn fifteen years later. The expected and prophesied demise of the sugar industry did not occur, for it was found by experience that white men could live within the tropics, especially if suitable adjustments were made; in fact the acreage under sugar in 1905 was 134,000, producing over 152,000 tons; in 1921 162,000 acres, with a production of 167,401 tons; in 1923, 201,000 were under cane, with 280,000 tons.<sup>2</sup> But as with the Chinese in the gold-fields, so with the Kanakas in Queensland, economic conditions were primarily responsible for their disappearance.

Railway-building in Northern Territory (Southern Australia) was responsible for the introduction in 1882 of Indian coolies, and in 1887 of Chinese labourers for work on the Pine Creek Railway, but these newcomers were but temporary workers, and did not settle for any length of time in that part of the State to which they had been admitted.

So long as there was no Federation of Australian States, it was

<sup>1</sup> *Menace of Colour*, Gregory, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

possible for differing policies and regulations to be in force at the same time in various parts of the continent, while the differing rates of development in the States led to the adoption of varying attitudes towards the admission of other races. Thus Western Australia, which was the last State to have self-government and has always maintained an uneasy partnership with her sister-States, admitted Asiatics when the others refused to have them; South Australia allowed Chinese labour to the North but not to the South, making a distinction between tropical and other districts; while Queensland welcomed indentured Kanakas, and even Japanese, to her sugar-producing areas, and also to the pearl fisheries of the Torres Straits, where, incidentally, strained relations between them and the aborigines soon came into prominence. Until about 1896 such discriminatory legislation as had been passed was aimed at the Chinese only, but in that year the Australian Premiers supported the principles of the Coloured Races, Restriction and Regulation Bills, introduced into three States, by withdrawing from the Commercial Treaty signed two years previously between Britain and Japan, whereby the nationals of the latter country had the right of admission into Australia. Queensland, as might be expected, stood out on a "Gentleman's Agreement", under the terms of which passports were issued by the Japanese authorities only to those classes of intending immigrants whom Queensland had already intimated she would be willing to accept. The 1896 Act restricted the entrance not merely of Chinese and Japanese, but also of Indians who were fellow-subjects, with the Australians, of the King—or Queen; at the Colonial Conference of the following year, Chamberlain's advice was that the colonies should clothe their legislation in "a form of words which will avoid hurting the feelings of any of Her Majesty's subjects", and held up for them to copy the example of Natal, which imposed an educational test upon would-be immigrants, of such a sort that none but those whose skin was the required colour could pass it. The subterfuges adopted were perhaps amusing, certainly hypocritical and unworthy. A language test was chosen—but which language? The selection of English would offend Europeans, so let it be a European language. But could you expect Japanese to learn a European language? No! This offended their racial pride. Eventually a later Act (1905) substituted a test in "any prescribed language", but, by a mysterious unanimity, the language prescribed and chosen was just the one which the immigrant whose exclusion was desired did not know!

As the problems which confronted the four South African States in their dealings with the native population were one of the causes which led to the formation of the Union, so the desirability

of having a uniform policy controlling the rate and sources of immigration into Australia had a powerful influence in bringing about the Commonwealth, in spite of certain centrifugal forces which even now sometimes show themselves. It was the work of the first Parliament to lay down the principles governing their resolve that the "White Australia" policy should be the foundation on which all else could be built. As Deakin later expressed it, "The unity of Australia is nothing if it does not imply a united race . . . a united race means a people possessing the same general cast of character, tone of thought, the same constitutional training and traditions". It was obvious that the more serious threat to this objective came from the unrestricted immigration of Orientals. We have seen how at first the Chinese were barred; before long their place had been taken by the Japanese, who in the first decade of the 20th century became almost the "bogey men", particularly in the eyes of the Australian evening papers, which kept alive the potential threat from that quarter even when Japan seemed to harbour no designs—at least openly expressed—against Australia.

As the Chatham House paper on Japan puts it, the Island Empire had conducted her foreign policy in such a manner as to secure the support of the predominant Power (Britain) in the Far East during her own adolescence.<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 was unwelcome to Australian politicians, who feared that under the shelter of Great Britain the Power whose attentions they most dreaded would grow in strength and influence till the time came when she could do without Western countenance, and then, declaring herself independent, give full rein to that queer combination of mystic idealism and realistic aggressiveness which constitutes her most powerful asset. The results of the Russo-Japanese War seemed to justify Australians in their fear, the treatment of Korea, which Japan had previously occupied, gave a hint of what Japanese policy could do, and as the direct result of the genuine uneasiness which these events, as well as the growth of the Japanese mercantile marine, produced, we have the introduction of compulsory military service and the early beginnings of an Australian navy. The war of 1914–1918 saw Japan's position recognized in a way that was even more unwelcome to Australia, which imposed further restrictions both on trade and the entry of her nationals in 1917, while the assignment of the Caroline Islands to a Japanese mandate, soon to become admitted annexation, was a further cause of alarm.

But though Japan came to the Versailles Conference as a member of the victorious Powers, she left with various grievances

<sup>1</sup> *Japan's Purpose in Asia*, 1941, R.I.I.A., p. 8.



which bitterly affronted her racial pride as well as disappointed her annexationist ambitions. The business of the Shantung peninsula, the later evacuation of Vladivostock, the sharing with Russia of Sakhalin, did not affect Japan so deeply as the "insult" to her racial pride which she suffered largely through the instrumentality of the Australian Prime Minister, W. H. Hughes. The story of her attempt to secure the recognition of the principle of "racial equality" has been well and graphically told by Harold Nicolson.<sup>1</sup> He describes the situation in the following way. "Mr. (*i.e.*, President) Wilson's position was complicated by two considerations. In the first place he had, in the early stages of the League of Nations Committee, been faced with a most awkward dilemma. On February 13th (1919) the Japanese had suggested that in the clause providing for religious equality the words 'and racial' should be inserted between the word 'religious' and the word 'equality'. They were persuaded to drop this painful amendment for the moment, but they again revived it on April 11th. Mr. Wilson then found himself in a grave difficulty. On the one hand the Equality of Man, as enshrined in the Covenant, implied the equality of the yellow man with the white man, might even imply the terrific theory of the equality of the white man with the black. On the other hand, no American Senate would ever dream of ratifying any Covenant which enshrined so dangerous a principle. On that occasion, the President had, by the skin of his teeth, been rescued by Mr. Hughes of Australia. The latter insisted that no such nonsensical theory as the equality of races should figure in the Covenant. Lord Cecil was instructed by the British Empire Delegation to support Mr. Hughes's contention in the League Committee. The Japanese, however, were not prepared to allow Mr. Wilson this providential alibi. They put the matter to the vote. They gained their point by eleven votes to six. Mr. Wilson, as Chairman, was faced with the unpleasant necessity of having to decree that the Japanese amendment 'had not been adopted' since it had failed to secure 'unanimous approval'. That incident had left even him with a nasty feeling inside."

It was this question of insult to their racial pride which not unnaturally touched the Japanese on the raw. Their consul in Sydney had put the matter succinctly when the exclusion of Kanakas was being discussed, and the educational and linguistic attainments of would-be immigrants were about to be tested. He said that to class Japanese with Kanakas was regarded in the light of a reproach which was hardly warranted by the fact of the shade of the national complexion. Actually, though Japanese emigration has been on a small scale—even in Brazil, where they were

<sup>1</sup> *Peacemaking 1919*, pp. 145-6.

originally welcomed, there were in 1930 only 113,558 of them—their conduct has been nearly everywhere exemplary, for they are by nature law-abiding, and maintain a standard of cleanliness in their persons and houses which might well be copied. There was, however, a certain suspicion, which appears to have been justified by later events, that espionage, both military and economic, was practised on a considerable scale. Be that as it may, all the well-established commercial Powers resented the arrival of a new intruder to dispute with them the possession of markets of which they thought they had a monopoly . . . and a monopoly in those areas which most vitally affected Japan's interests.

There would seem to be running through the Japanese character a strange mixture of idealism and realism, accompanied by an inner conflict which hates the very forces of Western science and progress which have done much to bring Japan to that position of pre-eminence which is now hers. She has seen a Western Power control and economically enslave a land many times larger than itself, and she has sympathized with the revulsion that India undoubtedly feels towards many of the aims and practices of Great Britain. There was at one time a real fear that China, too, would go the way of India and become the satellite of countries vastly inferior to her in numbers and area. But Japan's training at the hands of the Western Powers had given her an insight into both their methods and their weaknesses, and enabled her to plan a vast economic campaign, supported by a sincerely believed *mystique* about her place in the Orient which long ante-dated the Nazi New Order in Europe. We can see what the economic threat really was when we realize that the import of Japanese cotton piece-goods into West Africa rose from 2.5% in 1932 to 18.5 in 1934,<sup>1</sup> while in East Africa they represented 88% of the whole. This advance was brought about by adaptability to modern methods, utilization of scientific knowledge, ruthless efficiency, incredible hard work and the sacrifice of the individual to the national ideal. These at any time and in the case of any people would be formidable weapons, but they are joined to, and spring from, the deeply seated sentiment that the Japanese have a special mission not merely to the East, but to the whole world. They look upon themselves as a "peculiar people", the children of the gods who have put their representative on the throne of Nippon to lead them wherever they would. To the West this seems to be an absurd rigmarole, but we have seen much nearer home the strange and awful effect of somewhat similar "myths" based upon blood and soil.

Now, while there is much more that can be said about the

<sup>1</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1336.

psychological background of the Japanese people and the strange refluxing tides that sway their feelings, it is obvious that a nation brought up with such sentiments cannot remain indifferent to what they deem "insults" to their national pride—if once they do that, they give up at one sweep their claim to lead the Pacific world and organize it into the "Mutual Co-Prosperity Sphere" for Japan herself, Manchukuo, a large part of China, Indo-China, Thailand, the Dutch East Indies—the greater part of Oceania, the Philippines<sup>1</sup>—even if all thought is abandoned of including Australia. Taking the situation by and large, the Japanese Government behaved with considerable circumspection; they divided the question into three parts—freedom of immigration, treatment of immigrants once allowed to enter, and racial discrimination<sup>2</sup>—and always admitted the right of any Government to make equitable rules for the control of immigrants. It was not until the middle of the eighties of the last century that Japanese emigrants were allowed to leave their own country, and after that by a series of "Gentleman's Agreements" they regulated the position *vis-à-vis* the United States, Canada and Australia: these seemed to work well until Japan realized that Australia refused to recognize her racial equality in the League of Nations Covenant, and until a series of American laws raised the question in an acute form, for these new regulations grievously prejudiced the position of Japanese already resident on the West Coast, particularly in relation to the ownership of land, and also erected discriminatory rules against immigrants solely on the ground of their race, in ways that could only be regarded as offensive.

There is much, therefore, in the situation which might produce the grimmest of conflicts—or rather in these days has already done so—yet it would be difficult to assert that the attack of Japan upon the United States, the Netherlands Indies and Australia was the direct result of the impact of this racial sentiment and economic necessity upon the blank wall of exclusiveness erected by the white Powers. For one thing, there is some evidence that, at least in Australia, the minds of the younger generation were moving towards a less negative conception of the right attitude to take towards Japan,<sup>3</sup> while there was a growing realization that if the standard of living could be raised in the Island Kingdom, and, as a result, a greater demand for wool followed, Australia might find in Japan one of her most valuable customers for her most extensive export.<sup>4</sup> Both Canada and Australia experienced in 1935

<sup>1</sup> *Japan's Purpose in Asia*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Japan*, F. C. Jones, 1933, pp. 84 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *India and the Pacific*, C. F. Andrews.

<sup>4</sup> In 1936 Australia's wool exports to Japan had been 770,000 bales, 25%  
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and 1936 some of the disadvantages attendant upon a trade conflict with Japan, and in the long run it might not be worth their while permanently to antagonize a country which could take so large a proportion of their raw materials.

It is difficult, on the other hand, to controvert the Australian thesis that if a high standard of living is to be maintained within that continent, then alien labour must be rigorously controlled. The policy has actually been carried a stage farther than was envisaged by those responsible for passing the Immigration Restriction Act,<sup>1</sup> by an attempt to expel a number of Italians who were engaged in Western Australia in such capacities as vine-dressers, timber-fellers and miners, and had also shown that they could adapt themselves to the tropical conditions prevalent in the northern parts of Queensland. Some of the complaint against them was that they were brought into Australia originally under "indenture"—a phrase which obviously meant something rather different when it was applied to European labourers than when it referred to Kanakas. The Labour Party, the great exponent of the "White Australia" policy, was determined neither to admit nor to allow to remain any who had been introduced by employers "under contract to perform manual labour", especially when the immigrants might be ignorant of local conditions in Australia, and before leaving their own homes had signed contracts for work at rates lower than those normally prevailing in their new home. The attitude showed itself in opposition to the admission even of English artisans. As for the Italians, it was proved that they were healthy, were not strictly "indentured", wished to join Trade Unions and had not undercut wages, and in their case the Government refused to employ against them the educational attainments test under the Immigration Restriction Act.

The experience of South Africa, with its poor-white problem, has sunk deeply into the minds of Australians, for they have realized how cheaply paid indentured labour, like that of the Chinese in the early years of the 20th century or of the African throughout South Africa's economic history, has produced what is nearly the most intractable of her many quandaries. The "civilized labour policy", with its vast disparity between the wages of the whites and those of the blacks, really led to an unnatural heightening in the scale of the former and a depression in that of the latter, a double standard which it would probably have been impossible to maintain had it not been for the gold-mining industry, which had subsidized the poor white community

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of the wool clip—13% of total export trade. New Zealand in 1937 sold £NZ.2,705,900; in 1939, £326,700.

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge History of British Empire*, Vol. VII, Part 1, pp. 502 ff.

and, indeed, the whole country. Thus South Africa has come to depend, to a degree that may one day be hazardous, on what is after all a wasting resource, and on an industry which even yet may be faced by severe competition from other parts of the continent not yet thoroughly surveyed; and during this time the relative importance of agriculture has declined.<sup>1</sup> Australia is not tied to any one great industry, even though her reliance on such primary products as her meat, wool and dairy produce may make her economy more susceptible to quick rise and fall in the price of these commodities in the world market; but, whatever the prospect, she seems determined to avoid the double standard, the internal disharmony, which would inevitably result from the immigration on a large scale of cheap labour. Cheap labour is, of course, not necessarily the same as efficient labour. It has been proved, for instance,<sup>2</sup> that the American textile worker receives about four or five times the average Japanese wage for the same length of day, that the average working day in Japan is 10½ hours (in 1927), that rest days vary from two to four a month; but that American labour is so efficiently organized that it requires only from one-sixth to one-ninth as many operatives to work its looms, that the overhead clerical work is correspondingly decreased — and as a consequence American output is as much, in some cases, as seven and a half times the Japanese. But these conditions obtain in different economic systems, almost separated from each other by water-tight compartments with quite distinct social backgrounds, with the protection of the American tariff wall against Japanese imports, and of the quota system in many places abroad. How devastating the effect would be were they to operate within the same country can easily be guessed.

A country which allows —and even encourages—the exploitation of its own citizens as Japan does is not likely to be troubled by humanitarian or liberal principles when it comes to control races and peoples in lands which it has subjected. Formosa and Korea were the first to have experience of Japanese technique in assimilating the economy of less developed territories to their own. These two were assigned the classic rôle of suppliers of raw material to a State rapidly advancing in industrialization, but unfortunately they produce few of the things which Japan really needs for this purpose. They do, however, grow considerable quantities of rice and sugar, all of which is earmarked for the Japanese market, which is now independent of the foreign sources which used to supply it, particularly with sugar. By a gigantic system of

<sup>1</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 637, 684-5, 816, 1363-5, 1533.

<sup>2</sup> "An Analysis of Japan's Cheap Labour", Orchard, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. XLIV, No. 2, pp. 215-58.

exploiting the most profitable of the industries of Korea and Formosa, of their resources and labour, and of protecting them by tariff laws and monopoly prices. Japan has achieved the first of her aims, which were outlined by Baron Makoto Saito, the Governor-General of Formosa—that is, the economic development of these countries on the best mercantilist lines; to the other two she has as yet given little thought, and under present conditions is not likely to do so. These were: the education and the raising of the standards of the people, and after that—a long way after—"political development may be possible". It does not need much imagination to assess the importance of the last two compared with the first—the suppression of Korean discontent with an iron hand and the yearly expenditure of 15,000,000 yen on "law and order" are sufficient commentary.<sup>1</sup>

Australia is not yet an industrialized continent—she lives on the produce of primary necessities, so that, even should the present war rapidly increase the *tempo* of an industrial revolution, she is not under the necessity of exploiting in the same way undeveloped areas which have fallen to her—for instance, her mandate of Papua. The deplorable history of the aborigines has not been repeated here—in several striking ways the conscience of Australia has been stirred by their fate, and somewhat tardy measures have been taken to preserve the sad remnant of this race. In Papua natives of an equally humble cultural status came under her control, but anthropology and an enlightened policy combined to secure far different treatment for the Papuans—they did not, naturally, interfere with farming and ranging, as the aborigines supposedly had done, for the white population of Rabaul, the former capital, amounted to only 750 at the time of the Japanese invasion. But from the beginning the declared policy of the mandatory Power was to preserve them from the exploitation and degeneration which had only too often followed upon their contact with the white man,<sup>2</sup> who discovered that the ideas of work held by the natives of Polynesia were totally different from his and, in making them conform to his own, exterminated or demoralized them. In 1853, when the French occupied New Caledonia, they found a native population of about 70,000; 75 years later it had fallen to 25,000.<sup>3</sup> A century ago the Marquesans numbered 100,000, today they number 2,400. Thus indentured labourers from India or elsewhere were not allowed into Papua, as they had been into Fiji, nor into the Con-

<sup>1</sup> *The International Share-Out*, pp. 71-8; "Japan's New Policy in Korea and Formosa", R. Hayden, *Foreign Affairs*, March 1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of British Empire*, *op. cit.*, p. 622.

<sup>3</sup> *ABC of the Pacific*, Woodman, pl. 6.

dominium of New Hebrides, though the French have apparently let them in; under the 1918 Native Plantations Ordinance definite encouragement was given to the growth particularly of copra and rubber, by natives on plantations owned and worked by themselves, with the object of building up a society and a more advanced culture which would be consonant with the Papuans' own ideals and possibilities.

The introduction of a Taxation Ordinance the following year would suggest that the same influences that we have seen elsewhere were at work to drive natives to wage labour, but its declared aim was to make native policy as self-supporting as possible, with the proceeds of the tax devoted to specific objects, such as the improvement of native plantations, native education, village improvement, and the provision of bonuses for large families, for the experience of Fiji, which is well on the way to committing race suicide, was not lost upon the framers of the Ordinance. Its incidence was limited to males between fifteen and thirty-six (in contrast with the South African poll-tax, which apparently has no upper limit), even though it was fairly heavy, being graded from 5s. to £1 per head. The policy has undoubtedly been liberal and gone far to success—it has encouraged the natives to undertake new activities and interests, improved their housing, given them the means to secure greater personal<sup>1</sup> comfort and protected them when and where they most needed protection. On the whole, Papua, under its Mandate, has fared better than the Solomon Islands, which still continue under Crown Colony Government, representing a system that is in every way alien to their inhabitants, not growing naturally out of their daily lives and producing considerable restlessness among the younger generation.<sup>2</sup>

The problems of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies dwarf, by their size and the wealth involved, most of the other difficulties which have sprung to birth in the islands of the Pacific, but there is one area, not large compared with them, nor thickly populated, in which we can see *in petto* most of the enigmas which land tenure, indentured labour, the impact of sophisticated and aggressive civilization upon simple and tranquil communities have provided for the white man to solve. In Fiji, and some of the Solomon Islands, conditions have been reproduced which parallel those in Malaya or the West Indies. Fiji, with an area of only 7,999 square miles and a population of about 200,000, is much more developed than Papua, which has but 300,000 to its 91,000 square miles; it

<sup>1</sup> *Native Education and Culture Contract in New Guinea*, W. C. Groves (Melbourne), 1936.

<sup>2</sup> *Experiments in Civilisation*, Hogbin, pp. 153-9.

has moreover a large Indian colony of some 85,000, so that we have side by side the elements representative of Whitehall and missionary societies, industry (mainly the Colonial Sugar Refining Company), the native Fijians, and the immigrant Indians. As usual, land questions are fundamental, for the British Government in its earliest agreements with the natives, 70 years ago, stipulated that they should remain the general landowners, and that no large alienations should be carried out. That policy has been adhered to, with the result that the Fijian is secure in his possession, feels no compulsion to work (why should he?), but in the eyes of most white men is simply succumbing to the penalty of idleness. It has been estimated that more than 80% of the land is owned and held as tribal property by Fijians,<sup>1</sup> though they form less than 50% of the total population.

The sugar industry, which within 100 years has grown to be the staple of Fiji, began to cry out for the labour which the native landowner—or rather the joint owner of tribal land—was unwilling to supply in his own person, so recourse was had to the time-honoured expedient of indentured labour from India, the one available source, since Java, in spite of its population density, had no surplus, and Chinese immigrants would not have been acceptable to New Zealand, whose interest in Fiji was considerable. Fiji, of course, was not the only place to which indentured labour went—even today 36% of the population of Trinidad has come to the West from the East Indies, while in British Guiana their number, approximately 143,000, is greater than that of the ex-African negroes (131,000), while we are already familiar with them in Kenya, Natal and Malaya. To the South Sea Islands they came, less than half of them accompanied by their women, under a contract to work for 5 years, at the rate of 5s. 6d. a week,<sup>2</sup> with the threat of heavy penalties should they break their indenture. Many died there, comparatively few returned home, and before very long a substantial Indian colony grew up. Their quarters as indentured labourers were poor, conditions generally unsatisfactory, and taken all in all, the effect both upon the Indian immigrant and the Fijian native was likely to prove disastrous, for the Indian, who stayed, proved himself more than a match for the Fijian in husbandry and trade, yet remained with the stigma of his former condition upon him, while the native felt himself ousted by the stranger from all but the possession of land which he

<sup>1</sup> For all this section, see *India and the Pacific*, C. F. Andrews, 1937, from which much valuable information has been derived.

<sup>2</sup> *India and the Pacific*, C. F. Andrews, p. 36. Wages now vary from 1s. 8d. a day for cane-cutters to 1s. 11d. for 12 hours in the mills, with small bonuses: in the mines skilled workers get 25s., unskilled 14s., weekly.



himself did not put to the fullest use, feeling, too, that there was a vast reservoir of Indian labour which might burst its banks and wipe him out in one gigantic flood, as it had threatened to do the native Burmese rice-grower.

The campaign against indentures was fought with increasing vigour, both by Indians like Gandhi and by disinterested white men, aided by the sentiments against contract labour of any type which were prevalent among the white population of Australia, until by January 1st, 1920, the system was completely abolished; free labour, attracted only by the terms openly offered, relieved from the threat of criminal prosecutions for withdrawing work, was allowed in the islands, to the vast relief of Fijians and Indians. The latter now had a chance to prove their worth in a condition which less resembled slavery than previously, while the former, though anxious for the repatriation of those Indians hitherto employed, were not so fearful of the future. The morale of the Indian appreciably increased, the sex ratio began to straighten itself out, his education improved, the caste system is now modified, there are few restrictions on occupation, his women go unveiled, there is little open friction between Hindus and Mohammedans<sup>1</sup> and though there has been no intermarriage between him and the native, their relations are much better than might have been expected, even though the Indian finds himself still debarred from active ownership of land, or not entitled to work it on a lease long enough to justify his improving it, or giving him any sense of security for a reasonable period of time. He feels that now, since at least two-thirds of his number have been born in the islands, some readjustment of the land system could be arranged, both for his profit and the ultimate economic benefit of the whole population, and that by a more equitable arrangement for credit through land banks, the burden of rural indebtedness, which is such a scourge both in Fiji and in India, could be relieved.

In spite of these difficulties, it would appear that the Fijians and Indians, by a tolerance which is common to both of them, are arriving at a *modus vivendi*, unmarked by bitterness and prejudice, but in very large degree their relations are conditioned by the attitude of the small European community, which is but one-fiftieth of the total population, and by the sentiment of those who direct the government and advise the Colonial Office. Something of the Kenya mentality has survived, which, being unable to alter the firmly established land system, sets itself to help widen the divisions which exist between European and coloured. The withholding of adequate advanced education from both Fijians and Indians, except perhaps for medical training—the centre at Suva,

<sup>1</sup> *South Seas in the Modern World*, Keesing, p. 278.

which in 1940 produced twelve graduates, was really the result of a Rockefeller Foundation Grant made in 1928, and now languishes till the end of the war for lack of further funds adequate to its aims—and this in spite of the fact that 90% of the Fijians, and 40% of the Indians, attend primary schools; the refusal to open any Civil Service post except minor clerkships to Indians, who are debarred from taking even the Matriculation examination; the disproportionate amount spent on education for a tiny European minority, while free compulsory education is refused to natives; and, throughout, a desire, not officially expressed but unofficially practised, to keep apart the “subject” races—an effort foiled by their growing participation side by side in athletics, Boy Scouts, service in shops and in some engineering concerns. There is, too, a constitutional struggle to which we shall later refer, as well as a “poor-white and Fijian” problem; for the conditions under which a rapidly growing population of mixed European and Fijian parentage are living are even worse than those which affect the Coloured population of South Africa.

Midway between Papua and Fiji the small group of the Solomon Islands<sup>1</sup> offers again in miniature a picture of the impact of European economies upon natives, an impact forcibly begun by the kidnapping of unfortunate islanders for labour on plantations—the notorious “blackbirding”, which gave that and other areas a particularly sinister reputation. This was followed by an extensive system of indentured labour, destined for the Queensland sugar plantations, where 40 years ago thousands of them—not all, of course, from the Solomon Islands—were working, and though the labourers were almost hand-picked, and in early manhood, the death rate reached the total of some 6% or 7% of those introduced. Mortality rates were high, not merely among those away from their homes, but also among the remaining population, which was affected not so much by the loss of the “will to live”, which some writers have stressed, but by the introduction of diseases such as smallpox, dysentery, measles and influenza, as well as of alcohol, opium and firearms—not to mention unsuitable clothing; while the ravages of tuberculosis on constitutions already undermined by malaria were estimated to have affected 10% of the population in 1928.<sup>2</sup> In Fiji an epidemic of influenza brought by warships from Sydney in 1874 was responsible for the loss of 40,000 lives from a population of about 110,000.<sup>3</sup> How inadequate even now is medical provision we can gauge from the fact that in 1934 there were only five doctors available for the care of

<sup>1</sup> For this section, see *Experiments in Civilization*, Hogbin, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge History of British Empire*, Vol. VII, Part I, “Australia”, p. 353.

the 100,000 inhabitants of the Solomons, two of them looking after the employees of commercial firms, two in hospitals, and one travelling, with some help from three or four European medical assistants, but without native trained nurses or midwives, the latter a crying necessity for areas whose infantile mortality is so high.<sup>1</sup>

The counterpart to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Fiji is Lever's Pacific Plantations, Ltd., which employs most of the labour, recruiting natives from seventeen or eighteen years of age for varying periods, on terms not unlike those we have seen in South African mines, where a small basic wage is supplemented by the provision of rations, quarters, blankets and some toilet necessities. Here it is mainly on copra plantations that they work, at rates of pay which vary in accordance with the world price of their product, subject to the same bewildering fluctuations that have affected so many agricultural commodities. This see-saw of prices is inexplicable to the native, yet influences him the world over. In Nigeria, where the native population works on its own land, and sells, directly or indirectly, to trading companies, there is a keen interest in the rise and fall of prices, and a corresponding bewilderment, leading to a freely expressed resentment, when palm-oil one year fetches 10s., and not so very long after only 10d.<sup>2</sup> The native merchant sees little distinction between trade and government, so that his complaints against the former get merged into criticism of the latter in such terms as "How can we pay tax if the Government does not order the trader to pay us more for our oil?"<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in Kenya, the vicissitudes of the coffee market deeply affected the Chagga growers, who before 1929 received 80s., then between 1932 and 1935 found the price reduced from 57s. 6d. to 27s. 6d., and then to an even lower figure.<sup>4</sup> The decline in rubber and sugar prices gives the native similar food for thought and ground for indignation, proving as baffling to him as it does to the average white man, who fails to understand why, when labour is available, the crop grown, transport waiting and machinery ready to work, the obvious need of the world for these articles cannot be met.

Copra has not been immune from the same mysterious influences, being worth in 1920, £39 14s.; in 1934, £8; in January 1938 £22 12s. 6d. a ton, and at the end of the same year, £12 12s. 6d. (in London—and probably a quarter to a third lower in the islands), and the copra-worker's wages have suffered in like manner;

<sup>1</sup> *Experiments in Civilization*, pp. 137-9.

<sup>2</sup> *African Women*, Leith-Ross, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> *Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, p. 119.

before 1934 he could reckon on getting £1 a month, but after that date his wages were reduced by no less than half, for an average working week of 50 hours.<sup>1</sup> When copra again began to rise, they went up to about £14 a year, together with rations and housing. £25 a year is the most that even the most trusted foreman or "boss-boy" can hope to earn. As has happened elsewhere, the supply of labour on these terms has proved unequal to the demand. The result was an urge to impose more money taxation, which would force the native to undertake plantation work. In Kenya this policy was expressed in the words of Lord Delamere, whose constant reiteration was that natives should be forced out to work to earn their living, that wages should be lowered, and that the amount of land held by them should be limited, while the opposite view was expressed by Sir Donald Cameron in his refusal to augment taxation in those areas where the natives could not make a living by working for themselves, "Coercion of labour by pressure of direct taxation is little if anything removed from coercion of labour by force; the latter is the more honest course."<sup>2</sup> This more enlightened attitude, of course, earned for its exponent a degree of unpopularity, and even hatred, which has not often been shown to Colonial Governors. In the Solomon Islands the head-tax has been levied upon all males between 16 and 45, with various gradations, at Thailaita being fixed at 5s., the same as in Nyasaland; in 1931-32 the Solomon Islands paid £10,000 as a result.<sup>3</sup>

We can see, therefore, that the basic facts in this small but significant area are not the relations of two races, or even of two colours, but the economic situation; there can be no such fear as that so keenly felt in South Africa, that a rapidly advancing black population will oust the dominant white from his position of technical superiority; it is rather a case of downright exploitation of a defenceless people, from whom, no doubt, education is being withheld, but who could not hope within measurable time to provide for themselves the economic machinery which would protect them and safeguard their interests. They are in the same position as was the white proletariat in England during the early years of the Industrial Revolution, when white masters were just as exigent in their demands, though perhaps the development of finance and monopoly capitalism in more modern times has victimized them still more severely.

<sup>1</sup> *Experiments in Civilisation*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *British Policy in Kenya Colony*, Dilley, p. 217; *African Survey*, pp. 639-40.

<sup>3</sup> *Experiments in Civilization*, p. 150.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### EDUCATION—I

“’Tis pleasing to be school’d in a strange tongue.”—Byron: *Don Juan*.

EDUCATION is fundamental for the problems we are considering. It occupies a nodal position, at the very centre of a whole intricate complex, ravelled together in an inextricable tangle, a Gordian knot that no rough-and-ready method of forcible dichotomy will satisfactorily resolve, but only the patient unweaving of the strands, with an infinity of understanding and sympathetic imagination. An ill-nourished people cannot be satisfactorily educated till their level of health is raised, and this cannot be done until they themselves understand their own need and are ready to co-operate intelligently in all measures that are taken. A superstitious people will oppose both sanitary and educational reforms until they have begun to comprehend something of the laws of cause and effect; an economically backward or exploited people will have neither the energy, the initiative nor the leisure to think, or to assimilate the thoughts which are presented to them; for they may raise a high psychological barrier against what they imagine is only a further attempt at enslavement, especially if some sacrifice is demanded—perhaps the withdrawal of their children from work. And ill-health, superstition and economic exploitation are among the major diseases from which so many subject people are suffering.

To all these handicaps must be added what one might call the biological difficulty, especially typified in certain theories which are commonly held, if not so publicly expressed, by interested parties, who also regard education at home as some special monopoly of their own, or as a commodity to be dealt out sparingly to the “lower orders”. They consider the educated negro as the “spoiled negro”, unwilling or unfitted to work just as they want him to, and they drive a wedge between those who have been educated and those who have not. This is sometimes even the attitude of officials,<sup>1</sup> who show themselves more interested in the “noble savage”, “the unspoilt child of nature”, and not in the educated one, who is apt to question and criticize, and even

<sup>1</sup> For the opposite point of view, vigorously expressed, see *My Tanganyika Service*, Sir Donald Cameron, pp. 244–5, 247. Cf. a South African opinion (*Africa's Peril*, Abercrombie, p. 150): “‘To continue developing the mind and the accompanying refinement of the morals, improvement, refinement and ennoblement’ is the definition of civilisation. Under this definition was not the tribal native more moral and noble in his character than the native that was detribalized?”

implant dangerous thoughts in the minds of his fellows; and if it is true that economic and political power is liberated by education, they have every reason to fear its spread.

Certain schools of biologists and psychologists have furnished the upholders of these theories with what they call scientific reasons, but which, in fact, turn out to be somewhat obvious rationalizations of a quite understandable fear. It is worth while quoting McDougall on this point. In his *Introduction to Psychology* he writes: "It seems indisputable that the negro race is, in certain respects, at a lower level of mental evolution than the white man; now if acquired characters are transmitted, even in a very slight degree, we may reasonably hope that after the negro race shall have been subjected to the better influences of civilization for a number of generations, it will be raised to a higher level of innate intellectual and moral capacity. If acquired characters are not in any degree transmitted, as the majority of biologists assert, then there is no hope that the civilization and education of the negro peoples, no matter how wisely and beneficently the work may be directed, will of themselves raise them to a higher level of innate capacity. Our hope and practical policy in relation to negroes must be profoundly affected by the establishment of the true answer to this question." It is easy to see how such a statement as that can be made the "scientific" justification for doing just nothing in the way of native education; you can almost hear the line of argument: even the biologists say that the negro is at a lower level - you can't alter people's character and minds - so why make the effort? After all, education may only make them discontented, give them desires and ambitions they never had before - if the opportunities are provided they won't know how to make use of them. To put it in its crudest terms: "This high-minded humanitarianism has rotted the native peoples of Africa, destroyed them body and soul. . . . Education, what crimes are committed in thy name!"<sup>1</sup> It is a familiar tale, not entirely unknown even in England today.

It must be remembered that the African native has lived comparatively isolated from the main stream of culture by the imagined terrors of his own home, its climate and diseases, and that, though Arabic and Islamic influence has often modified his outlook, yet his wonderful assimilative powers have hitherto proved too strong for such influence to effect a radical change in him, nor until recently has he had to measure his own intellectual and moral resources against those of other people. He has thus developed an outlook *sui generis* containing perhaps a richer emotional content at the expense of his rational faculties, a

<sup>1</sup> *Africa's Peril*, Abercrombie, pp. 188, 199.

development of those qualities which unite people into communities, which are the cement and bond of friendship, but which may lose their effectiveness for wider action by being concentrated into the narrow circle of his communal life. In this communal life the inventor, the initiator, the speculative pioneer is at a discount because his activities are likely to undermine the solidarity of the tribal framework in which all alike live. Indeed, one of the hardest lessons that the ordinary Bantu has to learn is the European outlook, which places its emphasis upon the man as an individual, often at the expense of his social qualities, so that the tribal mentality which so admirably fitted in with his communal existence may prove to be one of the biggest handicaps he has to face in his struggle for existence.<sup>1</sup> One of the major criticisms levelled at our Western educational system has been its failure to educate the emotions, and to concentrate all on the attainment of intellectual fitness, leading to an arid rationalism, unwatered by generous sentiments, and neglecting that vital part of education—the training of the senses.

Westermann<sup>2</sup> has shown how, in the African negro, thinking is “emotional”, and, as such, of shorter duration than the thinking which depends on intensive and logical ratiocination; his enthusiasms are transitory and rather volatile unless constantly appealed to by the various stimuli familiar to him, and as a consequence he fails in projects which demand for their success long-distance planning—he lives on a short-term, not a long-term, policy. If he can perceive the relation of what he is doing, or what he is told to do, to some immediate purpose, then his work can be willing and effective; if he can feel, as a personal emotion, the result of his labours, then his interest is alive and all his energies bent to the fulfilment of the task. While, too, the communal background of his whole life can teach us valuable lessons, yet it sometimes has the effect of weakening the personal sense of responsibility which the educated man must feel—few indeed are the Africans who, like Newton, have “voyaged on strange seas of thought, *alone*”. Though no one would deny the richness of variety in African temperament and character, the very intensiveness of the communal existence has probably meant that many an individual has been sacrificed to the group rather than having had the opportunity to fertilize his group with the productive energy of new thoughts and new outlooks.

In his own tribal society there would thus be few individuals whose position, power or wealth would so overshadow everyone else that a superiority complex was engendered in them, with a

<sup>1</sup> *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. Schapera, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *The African Today and Tomorrow* (O.U.P., 1939 ed.), pp. 38 ff.

corresponding reaction in all other members of the group. The conscious assumption of superiority which has so often marked the white man in his dealings with the negro confronts the latter with an attitude of mind to which he usually makes one of two replies<sup>1</sup>—he either becomes obsequious and self-depreciatory, or else tries to show the white man, as indeed he is entitled to, that he is just as good as the other fellow—but he adopts a bumptious, self-assertive attitude which is ultimately more deadly and destructive of good personal relations than anything else. He pays the penalty of the very sensitiveness of his own nature, and it should be the aim of education to create in both races a just and charitable appreciation of each other, and to provide the African with the technique and training so to develop his own gifts that the white man will recognize that he has something indispensable to bring to a common pool, which will enrich by its own spontaneous energy the linked life they both must lead.

The inferiority complex which not infrequently is implanted in the mind of the individual African extends to the whole range of his achievements, for all too often in the past the attitude of the white man has been: "Can anything good come out of Africa?" The African system of agriculture has been condemned, though it can be shown that in many ways it is fitted to the attendant circumstances;<sup>2</sup> customs—as for instance the "bride-price"—are regarded as degrading, because their purpose is misconceived, the African's attitude to punctuality, truth and work criticized, even though based on different premises from those of the European. Mary Kingsley was keenly alive to the dangers which such an outlook of superiority was likely to engender: in a letter of 1899 she wrote,<sup>3</sup> "The white race seems to me to blame in saying that all the reason for its interference in Africa is the improvement of the native African, and then proceeding to alter African institutions, without in the least understanding them, while the African is to blame for not placing clearly before the Anglo-Saxon what African institutions really are, and so combating the false and exaggerated views given of them," and a little later, "I believe that no race can, as a race, advance except on its own line of development, and that it is the duty of England, if she intends really and truly to advance the African on the plane of culture and make him a citizen of the world, to preserve the African nationalism and not to destroy it, but destroy it she will unless you who know it come forward and demonstrate that African nationalism is a good thing and that it is not a welter of barbarism,

<sup>1</sup> *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Kenya*, Leakey, pp. 122–3.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Mary Kingsley*, Penguin edition, pp. 186–7.



cannibalism and cruelty." An African chief once put the matter from his point of view when he asked, "Why is it that so many Europeans think we knew nothing before they came? Is it that they are not interested in our ways, that they despise our manhood?"<sup>1</sup>

In two particulars the Bantu seems to have fallen short—he has not devised an adequate system of writing which would serve for the recording, preservation and transmission of his history or his primitive science, which have thus had to depend on the spoken word alone, with no standard of reference by which accuracy could be checked, or anything like a stable body of fact passed on from generation to generation. When the earliest missionaries to Africa wished to translate into a native tongue their Scriptures, or to gather together accounts told them by natives, they had to devise some method of representing in their own script the African words they heard. This orthographic difficulty and the confusion and multiplicity of scripts have hampered the spread of education in the vernaculars (of which there are about 700), and though as early as 1850<sup>2</sup> a uniform system was adopted by many Protestant missionary societies, it is only within the last fifteen years that some simpler and yet satisfactory orthography has been widely disseminated, though naturally it cannot hope for universal acceptance for a long time yet, or until there exists a literature of native origin worth preserving, for it is this which will give real life to further intellectual activity.

The other striking deficiency which even early travellers noted in the African's make-up was his comparative backwardness in the use of tools—again to quote Mary Kingsley: "The African differs not only from Europeans but Asiatics in being strangely deficient in mechanical culture—he is less of a tool-maker than other breeds of men." It was the Basel missionaries whose great service it was to have brought technical instruction to the native, and to have laid the foundations for the remarkable spread of this type of education. Another of their services was in the Gold Coast, where, established since 1828, they encouraged the growth of cocoa till it is now of pre-eminent importance in the economic life of the colony, and again in the Cameroons, where they fought vigorously in defence of native rights. But if the African was slow in developing a tool sense for himself, he soon made rapid headway when the technique was shown to him, proving in certain parts of Central and Southern Africa that he has immense capabilities in this direction, now only stifled and repressed by the colour-bar legislation of the Union and its political satellites. During the

<sup>1</sup> *Five Points for Africa*, Wrong, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, p. 78.

depression years of 1929-33 in the Belgian Congo it was necessary to reduce considerably the number of white employees on railways and in mines, but when the alternating boom came, the staff engaged to take their places was nearly all native, able to carry out efficiently the work hitherto done by Europeans. The negro is, of course, supremely adaptable, and perhaps compensates for a certain lack of originality by quite phenomenal powers of imitation. These qualities, valuable in many contexts of life, have their reverse side; for he can become adaptable to the wrong sort of things—it has been found that a considerable objection to imprisonment for relatively minor offences is this adaptability,<sup>1</sup> which makes him a ready prey to the contaminating influence of hardened criminals with whom he may come in contact, a danger which is even more acute in the large mining compounds. Even his mimetic qualities are sometimes used as an argument for his own inferiority—the prevalent European fashion of clothes, speech, gesture (and even vice) he copies with alarming fidelity, thus paying an unconscious tribute to the superiority of his models, and by a touch of exaggeration, or possibly even burlesque, exciting in them ridicule and mockery, to which he is painfully sensitive.

These two factors of adaptability and imitation mean that the acquirement of foreign languages is not the painful process that it is with English children, though facility in them is more noticeable in oral use than in reading. It is partly respect for the language of his masters, and partly the feeling that some economic advantage may accrue if he can demonstrate his mastery of English in particular, even if it is of a rather baleful brand. He is aided,<sup>2</sup> too, by a capacious memory, which so frequently accompanies the lack of books and written records, and an acute, if superficial, power of observation, which tends to lose its way and its main thread in a mass of detail, unsifted by discrimination. We have been accustomed to emphasize the value for education that lies both in the study of foreign languages and in foreign travel—the Bantu is a great traveller, to whom the vast spaces of his own continent offer remarkable opportunities, even if it is mainly poverty and the search for work that drive him to take those long and often perilous journeys of hundreds of miles. Congo natives flock into Uganda, labourers from Angola march into Congo,<sup>3</sup> Nyasas are found everywhere from Cape Town to Kenya, while the mines at Johannesburg contain representatives of almost every tribe south of the Sahara. The Mohammedan

<sup>1</sup> *The African Labourer*, Orde-Browne, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *The Case for African Freedom*, Cary, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *The African Labourer*, Orde-Browne, pp. 121-1.

custom of making pilgrimages to famous shrines or centres of learning is one other influence in sending a few Africans to tread foreign roads. And wherever he goes, be he Moslem, Christian or Pagan, he observes and criticizes, weighing with impartial mind the various types of treatment to which he is subjected—"he regards the flag under which he works merely as an indication of the sort of treatment he may expect". This prevalence of travel gives the African ample scope for his love of dialectic: unending conversation, repartee, and the crystallization of his experiences and thoughts into pithy sayings and proverbs, or the dramatic reproduction of striking scenes and characters that have come within his experience, which he repeats with burlesque and parody, perhaps a self-protective integument in which he wraps himself against the hard knocks he receives, and, like so many persecuted races, he has learnt the divine lesson of tolerance, the idea of meeting injustice and ostracism by sunny light-hearted love and work.<sup>1</sup>

Within the last thirty years educational research has been carefully investigating the possibility of finding some completely objective measurement by which to judge the intelligence of individual children against the norm which standardization has found to be appropriate for their years, and to work out the relation between chronological and intellectual "age". The wide series of tests applied under the direction of Professor Yerkes to large numbers of the American Army during the last war, and the somewhat startling results which emerged from them—or perhaps the startling interpretation given to the results—suggest that a method not radically different might be used to evaluate the relative intelligence of white and black children. This has been done in some cases, though the greatest caution must be used in interpreting the results. In Africa alone it would be necessary to make tests over a tremendously wide area, at different periods, and take into account the varying lengths of time in which both tribes and individuals had been subjected to certain environmental influences, such as employment by Europeans, familiarity with writing, etc. It would then be necessary to devise tests which would be relevant to the whole background of African life, and not a reflection of the normal intellectual outlook of white people, and secure their standardization by the examination of very large numbers. As Julian Huxley says,<sup>2</sup> "No intelligence test has yet been devised which will discount the really large differences of home environment and early training".

In spite of the difficulties, certain tests on a small scale have

<sup>1</sup> *The African Today and Tomorrow*, p. 234; *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Africa View*, p. 384.

been made, in the United States, the West Indies, Kenya, and have yielded interesting results,<sup>1</sup> though perhaps too much has been built upon rather slender foundations, for the numbers tested seem to have been very small. It is extremely difficult to give just the correct value to the influence which the conditioning apparatus of environment, culture and economic background, imposed social and other disabilities, inevitably exercises, as well as to separate innate intelligence from attainments acquired by tuition and practice. On the whole, it would be a reasonable deduction from the results of these tests (and others described by Seligman and Davenport) to say that the average negro percentage compared with that of the white varies from 70 to 85, with a substantial proportion (14 to 20%) exceeding the median white score, but in all cases there is a very wide range of attainment and variation, and a big middle block where all the races overlap. It was also observed that where the tests demanded an appreciation of rhythm and other "non-rational" qualities, the negro was superior to the white; this is most obvious in music. Incidentally, in describing his gifts in this art, Dr. Scholes points out<sup>2</sup> how "slavery is rarely mentioned in American negro music, which finds no place for vindictive resentment, but with a grave melancholy expresses a longing for, and confidence in, the triumph of another world, in rhythmic and strongly emotional melody". From the present state of our evidence it must remain inconclusive whether the negro is intellectually inferior and will remain so, but the careers of eminent men of colour who have gained the opportunity which comes so much more readily to the white, suggest that the difference can never be as great as some assert, or wish it to be!

We may sum up by quoting the scientific verdict of anthropologists—"Anthropology provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority, religious affiliation, or linguistic heritage". And again, "There is little evidence to date in support of the conclusion that any particular race is inferior in mental capacity to any other race, or that there are fundamental racial differences in mental processes".<sup>3</sup> Similar conclusions were reached by Dr. Kamat, who examined large numbers of Western Indian children and decided that there was nothing in the mental constitution of Indian children that

<sup>1</sup> *Africa View*, pp. 384 ff.; *The African Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 29 ff.; *Christianity and the Race Problem*, pp. 86 ff.; Professor Seligman has also done some work on this subject; Professor Oliver in *Year-Book of Education*, 1935, *Race and Racism*, Benedict; *The Physical and Mental Abilities of the American Negro*, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *Companion to Music*, Scholes, p. 972.

<sup>3</sup> *American Anthropological Association*, 1938; *Journal of the Royal African Society*, January 1938, W. B. Mumford and C. E. Smith.

called for the devising of tests radically different from those found suitable in the West.<sup>1</sup>

Ever since, in the middle of the 15th century, the first Portuguese priest landed in Africa, the major part of native education in the southern half of the Continent has been in the hands of European missionaries; even today they provide 80%; elsewhere, as an extreme example we may take Fiji, where 339 schools (1938) are run by missionaries and 7 by the Government. They are assisted, in the British Colonies, by grants-in-aid to enable them to continue their work, subject now to the general direction of their policy to keep it more or less in line with that laid down by the administration. From Northern Nigeria alone are missionary societies excluded. This system has, of course, saved the Governments a great deal of money, and has only been possible through the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of many men and women, but it has meant that educational organization is piecemeal and rather haphazard, policy tends to lack precision, both in method and objective (contrasted particularly with French organization), and not infrequently secular instruction has been neglected by an absorbing attention to the inculcation of religious views. On the other hand, the missionary societies have generally refused to teach, in South Africa, the accepted official theory about the supremacy of the white race, and have therefore been threatened, in a recommendation of the Native Affairs Statutory Commission, with the transfer of their educational work to the State, which will have no compunction in inculcating this doctrine and practising in its schools the racial discrimination it enforces in industry.<sup>2</sup> It is impossible, therefore, to get a clear-cut picture of the educational scene. As an extreme example of the economy thus possible to a Government we may take Nyasaland, where, out of an estimated population of 1,600,000, 48 African children are in schools maintained by the Government, and 57,014 in aided schools.<sup>3</sup> In the Cape Province of the Union, one in every 490 pupils is in a maintained, the rest in aided schools. Both in Uganda and Kenya large sums are voted as grants-in-aid to missionary societies.<sup>4</sup>

Those features which we have found in the economic, social and

<sup>1</sup> *Measuring Intelligence of Indian Children*, V. V. Kamat, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Hands off the Protectorates*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> These and other statistics are taken from *African Survey*, Table XL, opp. 1308, which gives full return of Government expenditure. Other authorities quoted as mentioned.

<sup>4</sup> Uganda £126,571 (1940), Kenya £85,313 (1941). In 1941 the Nigerian (S.P.) Government had to make a special additional grant of £26,000 to enable teachers' salaries to be paid; Northern Rhodesia also had to make a grant of £5,500.

political life of the Union we may reasonably expect to find in the educational, nor will our expectations be far out. The crux of the matter is the financial provision made to education as a whole, including grants-in-aid, and as this is a service allocated to the Provinces, it is inevitable that the amount of grant will vary in accordance with the sentiments of the provincial legislatures towards the native. Thus while Cape Province spends £2 4s. annually on each African of school age, the Transvaal grants them £1 1s. 11d.—for European children the figures are much more uniform, being £17 12s. 6d. and £18 17s. 8d. Provincial Councils are largely dependent<sup>1</sup> for their revenues on subsidies from the Union Government, which for educational purposes makes a block grant, together with sums which have been raised from native taxation. Now, the calculations which produce the figure to be allocated to native education are based upon inelastic facts, chiefly the practical impossibility of increasing the money raised by taxation from the natives. So we have the glaring anomaly by which grants to European, and to coloured, education are based on the average attendance of such children in schools, and so vary according to need, while native education is dependent very considerably on the natives' tax-paying capacities in other words, the economically weakest section of the community has to pay for its own services, while those who are immeasurably better off have them on a national account. No white man, is what it amounts to, may be taxed for the benefit of natives, even in education, even though the cost per African child comes to one-fortieth that of a European,<sup>2</sup> and this in spite of the tragic fact that 70% of the native population of school age is actually not in school, while not more than 4 in 1,000 ever reach Standard VI of the Cape Schools, and only 1 in 1,000 in Transvaal, Southern Rhodesia, Uganda and Kenya. It is in the Rhodesias that there is seen in its most scandalous form the gross discrimination which is made between white and black educational provision, for while Southern Rhodesia is content to spend £30 13s. 9d. and Northern £28 8s. 7d. on each of its European children (the combined European population is about 75,000), they are generous to the extent of 13s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. for each child of the Africans, whose total numbers are well over 3,000,000. In Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, where there are no European children to educate, the average expenditure on African children is about £3 per head. Of course, financial expenditure is not everything—the administration of Nyasaland gets a handsome return for the 1s. 10d. it pays to the missionary societies per head of their pupils, for the

<sup>1</sup> *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, pp. 41-4.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 1214-15.

Nyasa is in high demand; but it means that his education is carried on in buildings designed for other purposes, with a minimum of books, educational equipment and mechanical apparatus, and practically nothing in the way of medical supervision.

With this account of the educational provision as revealed by official statistics, we can only smile when we hear the remarks of one Sir William McLean, a member of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, who blatantly declared, "In Northern Rhodesia, as elsewhere, Government policy is to give the African every opportunity to advance to any post of employment for which he is capable and to provide the necessary education and training". In actual fact, native education is starved at every turn—in Northern Rhodesia there is as yet no secondary education,<sup>1</sup> and the small number who get it have to go to Makerere College in Uganda; over half the child population gets no schooling at all!<sup>2</sup>

It is no lack of keenness on the part of the African negro that justifies this niggardly expenditure; on the contrary, he is anxious, almost above anything else, to improve his own economic position by assimilating something of white education, in the hope that one day he will be raised above the slough in which so many of the more intelligent and keener-witted realize they are floundering. Often a serious internal conflict rages in the native's heart: he dislikes the white man, and the oppressive system he represents, yet can only fight him with the white man's own weapons, his own education and the technique which that imparts; often, too, the more educated he becomes, the more likely is he to be estranged from his own people, and end by becoming not merely the economic, but also the mental slave of those whom he intended to fight. Ill-health and malnutrition, scarcity of food, attendance at tribal ceremonies, child labour and a system which in Kenya and Uganda allows apprenticeship at the age of nine,<sup>3</sup> the very novelty of regular attendance—all these are adverse factors which militate heavily against a really satisfactory education. Hence the greater credit to Basutos, who, in common with other tribes, have imposed extra levies on themselves to provide wider education, but with greater success than elsewhere, for as long ago as 1932<sup>4</sup> their expenditure on this item in the Protectorate budget constituted 19% of the total—greater than on their police and prisons, which in the Union absorbed well over double the cost of education.

This does not mean that the educational system of Basutoland

<sup>1</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1243.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Colonial Report*, No. 1935, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *The African Labourer*, pp. 147, 154, 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, pp. 80-1.

is good, but rather that the country is extremely poor. A recent report (July 31st, 1943) shows that 68% of the children are in schools—but what schools! Of a random selection of twenty-four, only one had two classrooms, accommodating 173 and 95 pupils; all the others were single-room schools in which in one case 341 children gathered. Equipment is practically nil—one missionary society can afford annually when helped by government grant £1 4s. 10d. for each of its schools to provide desks, ink-wells, blackboards, easels, maps, chalk, records and other necessities; there may be as many as seven classes in such a school. There are, of course, no text-books. In an effort to adapt teaching to rural conditions, gardening is supposedly included in the curriculum, but many schools have no tools, and one with 177 pupils has five spades, two rakes and one hand fork. Teaching is in the hands of “trained men”—the majority of whom, for all their keenness, reach a standard somewhat below that of Oxford and Cambridge *Junior Locals*—a distinction entitling them to become “head masters” of a school of anything up to 300 pupils; after five years’ service they may receive a bonus of £6; there are no increments, pensions or sickness insurance. Keepers of Youth!

In Bechuanaland the Native Treasury Estimates were prepared to spend on education no less than 40% of their revenue,<sup>1</sup> and to push on with some reforms designed to lower the age at which children could enter school and to provide them with better buildings, though strangely enough added to these was the proposal to charge school fees, brought forward by the tribes themselves in order to secure better equipment and buildings from the increased revenue.

This business of school fees is another indication of the official attitude towards native education. In the Union education for Europeans is free and compulsory up to the age of fifteen or sixteen; it was only during 1941 that school fees for Bantu were abolished in the three provinces of Transvaal, Natal, Orange Free State, the Cape having long managed to do without them.<sup>2</sup> This will mean a loss in revenue to the missions of about £30,000, so that unless the provincial Governments increase their grants (a difficult process in view of the machinery by which native education is financed), the result may, illogically enough, be a diminution of the opportunities now available. Elsewhere, however, fees are still charged to natives, varying from 12s. to 15s. a

<sup>1</sup> *Social and Economic Progress of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1938-9*, H.M. Stationery Office.

<sup>2</sup> “Recent Trends in Native Education in South Africa”, J. Lewin, *Journal of Education*, June 1941.



year (in some few cases rising to £2 10s.), and their payment enforced.<sup>1</sup> What a contrast with the French and Belgian systems, which have a more genuine belief in the value of at least elementary education, and charge no fees at all in State schools, whether they are primary, technical or even boarding schools.<sup>2</sup> Only in the relatively advanced colonies, Ceylon, Mauritius, Palestine and Cyprus, is elementary education substantially free, though strangely enough Northern Rhodesia has abolished such fees.

We have been accustomed to regard the Cape Province as comparatively advanced in its educational policy and provision. If we take recent figures<sup>3</sup> we can see how even here there is a vast leeway to make up. In 1936 there were at least 40,000 "coloured" children of school age not in attendance, while no funds existed to provide any educational opportunities in Government schools for those who lived in remote areas. The number of European pupils in Standards III and IV was approximately the same, but only one-fifth of the coloured who were in Standard III ever got beyond that stage. As the report, perhaps ironically, remarked, "The fear that we are over-educating the coloured people has no foundation in fact". A similar state of affairs was found in native schools: the report pays tribute to the keenness of the natives in sending their children to school in the absence of compulsion, and then complains of, or rather quite objectively mentions, a lack of funds, under-staffing, and yet a surplus of potential teachers who cannot be absorbed because they cannot be paid, 50% of pupils in sub-standards, and 23,500 children under the responsibility of each medical inspector. Male teachers in native schools with three years teacher training after Standard VI are supposed to get £66 p.a., and women £54. In secondary schools men nominally receive £180, rising to £360, women £120, rising to £204; but in actuality, owing to shortage of funds provided for native education and raised from native taxation, there are no increments and no pension rights. Salaries just "stay put".<sup>4</sup> It is interesting, too, to compare the actual number of children in schools—1,966 European schools with 159,563 pupils, 951 coloured with 120,145, 1,877 native with 199,820 pupils. From the white point of view the most sinister fact was that over 31%<sup>5</sup> of the white children were unsatisfactory in nutrition and about 45% medically defective. No comparable figures exist for the

<sup>1</sup> *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, pp. 133 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 1263, 1273.

<sup>3</sup> The Report of the Superintendent General of Education for the Cape of Good Hope, 1940, August 1941.

<sup>4</sup> *Native Labour in South Africa*, Van der Horst, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the figures of 'poor-whites' already quoted, who fall under these headings.

native school population. This is only one other piece of evidence of the critical nature of the "poor-white" problem.

There are, however, striking indications that some of the more progressive minds in South Africa have at last been able to exercise a wholesome influence on two aspects of educational policy, dealing with social and medical questions.<sup>1</sup> No one has ever questioned the vicious conditions that exist in the mining compounds, or the alarmingly high rate of juvenile delinquency caused by insufficient parental supervision, broken homes, labour migration and moral instability. The Native Affairs Department, the Municipality of Johannesburg and the Chamber of Mines are all interested, in their different ways, in the questions involved, but here again it has been left to an unofficial body to take the real initiative—the Young Men's Christian Association, whose President was the Minister of Finance, J. H. Hofmeyr, founded in January 1941 the first school of Social Science, and named it after the uncle of its president, Jan H. Hofmeyr, whose words we have already quoted. Its Principal had already been responsible for Bantu Clubs on the Reef, and was now seconded from the American Board Mission to take charge of this new and potentially invaluable experiment, under which the Diploma in Social Studies would be awarded after two years' work on such subjects as sociology, native law and administration, economics, physical culture, hygiene, social legislation, drama, arts, crafts, accompanied by practical social work both on the Reef and in the rural districts, where isolation often hid grave problems. The first class of forty students was soon hard at work, carrying on in this new school the study of those subjects in which they had already won a Junior Certificate, and it was expected that a vivifying stream of young social enthusiasts would gradually make a profound influence on the life particularly of the urban Bantu.

The other development described by Colonel Reitz as a small first instalment of elementary justice, seems also to be a step in the right direction; it is the statement from the University of the Witwatersrand that from 1941 it can offer full clinical training to non-European students in its Medical and Dental Faculties. Hitherto many obstacles have been put in the way of would-be doctors and nurses, who have found European hospitals shut to them when they wished to complete their training or advance beyond the state of medical "aids"—all they could get in their own country was the first three years' training, and then, if either Bantu or Indian wished to qualify for general practice, he had to go overseas to get his degree. It can be seen that very, very few

<sup>1</sup> "Recent Trends in Native Education in South Africa", J. Lewin, *Journal of Education*, June 1941.

were in a position to do this, so that the new opportunity, coupled as it will be with an increase in hospital accommodation for non-Europeans, represents a great advance. Students will continue to take their First M.B. at the central shrine of South African native education, Fort Hare, and then proceed to Johannesburg. The great difficulty is the high cost of the six years' medical course, but the South African Native Trust has offered five annual scholarships each of £200 to selected candidates, the first group of whom, all science graduates, has been chosen and is now at work.

One of the most difficult questions that has to be solved in any system of education, whether it is intended for Southern and Central Africa or for India, is the choice of the medium of instruction. It was said that the one method of linguistic intercourse that could be used by members of an Indian cricket team who once toured the British Isles was English. A similar community of speech is essential in Africa, and yet it strikes at the individuality of tribal life, and is one more disintegrating factor in the mind of the native. Quite naturally it is also associated with economic superiority, for the acquisition of English seems to be one method of advance towards a higher status.<sup>1</sup> Its rich and varied literature gives wide practice in expression and the formation of ideas—vaster than any vernacular can offer—while any insistence on native tongues is often misinterpreted as a wish to palm off on the African something inferior. This misconception, arising partly from an inferiority complex, attached to social institutions as well as language, has had evil results for education as a whole. When, in the stages preparatory to the foundation of Achimota College,<sup>2</sup> a certain emphasis was laid on preserving the African nature of that experiment by insisting on the great value of African tradition and culture, a number of prominent Africans opposed it vigorously, on the ground that it gave Africans a system and outlook which the white man would not tolerate for himself. The negro leader, Du Bois, summed it up by saying that it was intended to "make the African fit in with the European's scheme of African exploitation and control". Unfortunately the absence of a really first-rate literature in any of the vernaculars makes it easier to justify their abandonment as a medium of intercourse, in addition to the difficulty of choosing any one language in preference to English in order to overcome the modern babel of tongues which would reign, and indeed does reign, in any large

<sup>1</sup> Compare the remark of an African, about the natives who grudged the time spent on learning, and being taught in their own language, "The people do not yet see education as food for body and soul, but only as a means of obtaining employment".—*African Women*, Leith Ross, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 237.

gathering of Africans. Of course<sup>1</sup> there are many white opponents, on political grounds, of the policy of teaching the natives English, but they themselves wish to learn it, and if they do not pick it up under systematized and well-directed instruction, they will assimilate it, one way or another, in dreadfully debased forms. It is interesting to note that practically all Church work is expressed in native languages,<sup>2</sup> so that a considerable portion of literature, ephemeral though it may be, has a religious background and religious subjects. In 1941 we find that of the total publications in Ibo (Nigeria), numbering 42, 21 were religious, 18 educational, 3 general.<sup>3</sup> The Native Purposes Board of New Zealand has taken steps to provide a literature for Maoris by collecting and publishing native traditions, poetry and history,<sup>4</sup> for they realized the need and value of such compositions.

The policy has gradually been evolved of conveying elementary instruction, in its earlier stages, through the vernacular, and of using the bountiful store of folk-lore and legend as material, but overriding necessity makes the learning of English inevitable as soon as the secondary stage is reached. French and Belgian practice<sup>5</sup> differs from British in this as in so much else—in French Colonies that language is the universal medium of instruction at all stages, and the natives make great headway in its fluent use; in 1921, when they regulated the educational work of missions, the French “prohibited the employment of native idioms in schools”.<sup>6</sup> In 1929 a native of French Africa was awarded the Prix Goncourt. In the Congo, only those whose work is likely to bring them into really close contact with the European are taught in, or learn, French, though it is obligatory in the middle schools. In the Dutch East Indies a compromise similar to that adopted by the British has been made, together with some experiments in “Basic Dutch” for those who require it. The growing acquaintance with machinery and the necessity for expressing ideas in more abstract terms than many African languages can provide are two factors which work to the disadvantage of vernaculars, while the notorious unwillingness (or laziness) of the white man to learn a native language puts a premium on any native who will go to the trouble of learning his master’s tongue.

The somewhat divided counsels that directed the choice of English as the language of instruction are to be seen also in the

<sup>1</sup> *Africa View*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> *The African Today and Tomorrow*, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibo Dialects and the Development of a Common Language*, Ward, Cambridge, 1941.

<sup>4</sup> *South Seas in the Modern World*, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 1262, 1275.

<sup>6</sup> *Africa and the Atlantic Charter*, appendix, pp. 46, 51.

confusion of aim which has made a good deal of African education miss its mark. Teaching in English was taken to mean teaching of English—of English literature, ways of thought and so on. This was quite proper in its degree, but education was very soon misinterpreted as solely the study of what was to be found in English books, with the result that an unreal world of second-hand experience was substituted for the very real world in the centre of which African students were living. A bookish quality settled particularly on West African studies, an atmosphere of cram not unlike that which in British India has made education at once a disappointment and a scorn, an eagerness to take English examinations, and even to clasp on to African schools the strait waistcoat that these have sometimes shown themselves to be in metropolitan education. In a way the educational pioneers who toiled so hard in the Southern States of North America were wiser in their aim, for they viewed education in the light of the social factors by which it was surrounded, and then tried to relate it to the environment in which the majority of its students would have to live. Where the conditions of that life betrayed a neglect of health, agriculture, handicraft, they set to work to show the pupil how he could improve his own world by the application of the knowledge which he gained in school. Over against this ideal which inspired the great Institutes at Hampton and Tuskegee is set what Dr. Huxley has called the "Academic Fallacy"<sup>1</sup>—the theory that education produces a superior caste, irrespective of the knowledge imparted or the manner in which it is applied. The main criticism directed by the Phelps-Stokes Commission after its second visit to Africa in 1920<sup>2</sup> was on these lines—the natives were regarded as so many empty jars, to be filled to the brim with the learning (not the wisdom) of the West, without sufficient consideration for the immediate practical use of such learning in the service of the community.

One school of thought—or perhaps one might call it hotbed of prejudice—frankly believes that nothing but the most utilitarian or technical instruction should ever be given to natives, that all other is merely spoiling them, or at least making them unfit for European service. That is the authentic voice of Kenya, which provides no secondary native education under Government control; but whether they would carry the technical instruction of natives to such a high level that they could be accepted for training and prove themselves excellent pilots and craftsmen, or, as engineers and mechanics, assemble Lockheed and Glenn Martin bombers, is much open to doubt; the Dutch in the East Indies

<sup>1</sup> *Africa View*, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 149.

have given Javanese the opportunity to train in this way, and are using the very capable products of this instruction.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most interesting and fruitful experiments yet made to combat the danger of too great an academic training divorced from reality has been the Jeanes schools, first founded, with help from the Carnegie Corporation, at Kabete in Kenya, in 1925. These have achieved a position of real importance not merely in the normal processes of education, but in the whole campaign for rural improvement. The most recent addition to their number was opened in January 1941 in Northern Rhodesia, and another is contemplated for Zanzibar, where Moslem practices and ideas may require the original plan to be modified, as they have been modified in their translation from the Southern American States, where they were first tried out, to the new and practically unlimited field of Africa. Originally their purpose was to train men who would have charge of rural schools and would be in their own area, the representatives both of a traditional culture and an untraditional attitude to problems of environment, where personal initiative, the confidence of their fellows, and a business sense were all required. From that considerable aim they have gone on to train teachers in everything that concerns rural life, with a strong practical bias, in courses which now last three years and are conducted in model villages,<sup>2</sup> built strictly on African pattern. Accompanied by their wives and families, the former of whom are also trained in matters relating to hygiene, maternity and child welfare, first in neighbouring villages and later in their homes, they make some contribution to the development of rural Africa, and by bringing attractive features to that life and to the schools, combat the trend to the towns which is seriously threatening the balance of the already jeopardized village and Reserve economy.

Jeanes schools are found mainly in those areas where there is no wide provision for higher education, and not in West Africa, where their place is taken by more academic training establishments attached to collegiate institutions, yet keeping in touch with native life. The position of the Gold Coast in the whole scheme of African education is peculiar, for here the population is generally lifted above the normal poverty line, by the riches which cocoa has brought (even though in 1940-41 124 people died of starvation in the town of Kumasi alone), and relieved

<sup>1</sup> *The Netherlands Overseas Territories*, R.I.I.A., pp. 45, 67.

<sup>2</sup> A model village on six square miles is planned in Teso of Uganda, where problems connected with malaria, worms, sanitation, balanced diet, stock-keeping and soil conservation will be studied, founded on an anonymous gift aided by government subsidy (*Crown Colonist*, July 1941).

from racial discrimination and a feeling of inferiority through the absence of any large white population. Though even twenty years ago Africans were here comparatively wealthy, and eager for education,<sup>1</sup> no instruction has been provided for more than 10% of their children of school age, in spite of the fact that the expenditure of £3 to £4 per head was higher than in any African Colony except Zanzibar;<sup>2</sup> but their country seemed to be the right one for the great—even hazardous—experiment of Achimota College, founded under the careful eye of a governor who deserves to rank with the most progressive and unprejudiced of British officials. £600,000 was a big price to pay. Perhaps something a little less expensive would have served the purpose equally well, for the size of the bill might well scare off any other Colony which aimed at providing an educational centre where could be gathered the various types of organization: school, training college, technical college, etc.; but Achimota has already put West African education on a higher level. An equally interesting development has been promised by the announcement (May 1943) that under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, a grant of £127,000 has been made to establish an Institute of West African Arts, Industries and Social Science, in the neighbourhood of Achimota. Among its tasks will be the necessary technical research and the training of Africans for the management of such industries as brick- and tile-making, stone-ware pottery and the spinning and weaving of cotton. On the other side of the Continent, far-sighted (and ambitious) educationalists are hoping that one day, in the fulness of time (not too long delayed), the schools and college now associated with Makerere in Uganda may grow up into the University of East Africa. Too long have Africans had to go far beyond the confines of their own country and continent to find the training which in most cases could equally well be given to them within it. The present war has, of course, cut off the Dutch East Indies from metropolitan Holland, so that, since the college at Batavia could no longer send its students to graduate there, as it used to do, it was authorized to grant University degrees. If only adequate financial provision were possible, the severing of normal relations of African advanced students with Britain and America might give an impetus to the movement to raise Makerere to University status.

While the education of African boys has made some little progress, the same cannot truly be said for that of girls. Such progress as has been made comes very largely from the initiative, and

<sup>1</sup> There is no provision by Government in the way of buildings for 600,000 boys and girls (*West African Review*, April 1941).

<sup>2</sup> *Plan for Africa*, Hinden, p. 183.

in some cases the adventurous experiments, conducted by missionary bodies, who are still almost wholly responsible for female education, except in those areas which, being Mohammedan by religion—though not always very strict Mohammedan—still retain an ancient prejudice against mission schools, and particularly schools for girls. As a general rule the position of women in African society is more independent than in Moslem countries;<sup>1</sup> there have been cases where a woman has exercised with vigour and efficiency the functions of chief, while the absence from Bantu tribes of so many men in external employment has given women a very considerable influence in their home. But even where, as in West Africa, they occupy a prominent position, the education of girls is starved.<sup>2</sup> The population of Nigeria is approximately 20,000,000, but only three girls' secondary schools exist; in the Gold Coast, with 3,000,000, one girl in every 100,000, compared with five boys, is taking a school certificate course, though in Sierra Leone and the Gambia the numbers are more nearly equal. In East Africa there is no complete secondary course for girls. These conditions do not exist, of course, for elementary education, though in this sphere the proportion of girls is also usually much smaller than that of boys, their school life shorter and, even as in countries nearer home, their attendance more irregular. Proportions do vary considerably, for in Nyasaland as many girls are in school as boys, because the latter are called upon to look after cattle, often at a distance from their homes;<sup>3</sup> in Kenya and in the Gold Coast the girls number only a third, or less, of the boys; in Uganda only one-tenth, while in Northern Rhodesia they are almost equal, though girls' schools are often very primitive, and quite inadequate for their purpose. Taken by and large throughout British Africa, only half as many girls are enrolled as boys, while their attendance is even less satisfactory—in fact, many educational statistics become merely nominal figures when accurately considered.

This backwardness of female education is very serious, for it means that the two halves of the community advance at greatly differing speeds, with the result that there is a lack of balance between the sexes which affects most adversely the whole tone of social life. Its influence upon the young cannot fail to be damag-

<sup>1</sup> In March 1941, in Northern Nigeria, 1,594 girls below the age of 10 were in N.A. schools, 3,944 in Mission schools (House of Commons, October 15th, 1941). The population of this section of the Colony is about 12,000,000.

<sup>2</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, May 1941 (series of articles).

<sup>3</sup> In one reserve in Bechuanaland Protectorate, where 922 children were in school, 754 were girls—the boys were at the cattle posts (*Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, pp. 55-6).



ing, or to prejudice their minds at an impressionable early age—it creates, incidentally, an awkward and interesting problem for those responsible for the training of women teachers, for women who have been educated, especially in hygiene and kindred matter, make better wives and mothers,<sup>1</sup> and so are lost for the further education of their own sex, even though their influence may be vital in their homes and in their immediate circle. The whole of female native education should be more closely related than any other to the environment in which they have to live, and also aim at starving out some—if not all—of the initiatory education that many tribes still pursue for their boys and girls. There is some evidence that this is being done, especially in Nigeria, where marriage-training schools give instruction to all classes of women according to their capacity. At least twenty-five of these schools are now preparing women for Christian home life. We have already mentioned the Jeanes schools, in which the wives of rural supervisors and teachers receive valuable training along with their husbands, but as yet there are far too few of these to make much impression on the black illiteracy and backwardness of so many African women.<sup>2</sup>

Before education can effectively spread, it is obvious that both the material conditions of adequate buildings and equipment and also a constant and ever-increasing supply of trained teachers must be satisfied. The former is not so important as the latter; indeed, it can well be argued that the most satisfactory type of school for certain circumstances—and not in Africa only—is one that can be inexpensively erected, demolished with ease and not too great sacrifice, and re-erected in a form to suit modern and ever-changing conditions. Education is thus unhampered by the difficulty of adapting new technique to old buildings, and the rapidly evolving quality of its progress kept before the eyes and minds of those who attend there or send their children. But however unpretentious the building, it should be a good example of its kind, built in consonance with native architectural tradition, sufficiently intimate to attract and not repel both children and adults; for education in Africa, as possibly in India, may show a better return for being addressed first to elder people. It is in adult education that its close relationship with environment can be most fully worked out in the manifold interactions of family and tribal life, in the position of women and the ambitions of men—here, as much as with younger children, it can help to

<sup>1</sup> Even though experience in Nigeria is somewhat different, see *African Women*, Leith Ross, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> For an admirable survey of women's education in Nigeria, but also applicable to most of Southern Africa, see *ibid.*

combat illiteracy,<sup>1</sup> which, while one of the barriers to progress, is perhaps not the most serious.

But the real crux is teacher training—it is so terribly patchy over the whole of African Colonial area, varying from bad in Kenya and the Gold Coast,<sup>2</sup> fairly advanced in Uganda (having risen from twenty recruits in 1931 to 600 in 1941, with a rise, too, in quality) to a fairly comprehensive but still defective system in Nigeria, with its energetic Nigerian Union of Teachers—in all of which the missions have their colleges, sometimes with, sometimes without, similar Government institutions. Only too frequently the initial qualifications of would-be teachers are deplorably low, while the dignity and emoluments which they attain are not sufficient to attract the best brains. Twenty-five shillings<sup>3</sup> a month for the initial salary of grade A teachers in East Africa, descending to a stationary 8s. for grade C, cannot be described as excessive.<sup>4</sup> In Nigerian elementary mission schools, certificated African teachers get from £30 to £60 per annum, in government schools £36 to £72—salaries much lower than those paid to clerks, so that the drain on the teaching profession effectively bars the way to further educational progress. In fact the whole expenditure on education (which at £250,000 represents only 4% of the budget) has varied little during the last ten years, even though schools have increased from 3,000 to 4,500, and pupils from 100,000 to 330,000. Even so, 90% of the Nigerian population is illiterate and seems destined long to remain so. In Northern Rhodesia, salaries vary between 17s. 6d. and £2 10s. for the highest paid;<sup>5</sup> in the Transvaal salaries are by comparison princely, being £5 10s. per month for men, £4 10s. for women, but many unqualified teachers are employed at £3 or even less.<sup>6</sup> “The labourer is worthy of his hire”, but he appears to have to work very hard to get it, and frequently as soon as something slightly more remunerative comes his way he throws up his teaching post, often permanently, and so is lost to his profession—a quite understandable change on his part, and a tendency which can only be checked when authority realizes that to get adequate teaching either on Reserves or in towns, it must pay a decent salary.

It would be almost better to leave the African uneducated than

<sup>1</sup> *The Case for African Freedom*, Cary, p. 88; *Mass Education in African Society*, Colonial No. 686 (1943).

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1250. In 1940, there were only 63 trained women teachers in the Gold Coast for nearly 20,000 girls in primary schools (Committee on G.C. Education, 1937: report of 1942).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1252.

<sup>4</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, March 27th, 1943.

<sup>5</sup> *Plan for Africa*, p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Race Relations News*, February 1942.

to shut our eyes to the fact that education will bring the colonial Powers face to face with situations which they will dread and which they will try to shirk.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the vernacular Press in South Africa, the rise in Nigeria of political parties like the National Democratic Party, the Young Democratic and the Youth Movement, now amalgamated into one powerful body, the growing interest in economic matters vigorously taken by Gold Coast cocoa-planters, the attempt in Kenya to found associations capable of criticizing both settlers and the Government, the general lack of respect towards tribal authority shown by educated Africans—all these are signs of the times, to which must be added the observation of Dr. Norman Leys that Christians of the second generation in Africa are always restive under any authority, civil or ecclesiastic, which they have no share in controlling.<sup>2</sup> Nor is the educated African *always* cut off from a tribal background, nor is he *always* the isolated embittered soul, ploughing a lone furrow—indeed, it has been noticed how different is his position in Sierra Leone compared with Nigeria and Gold Coast.<sup>3</sup> In the former admittedly he has practically no links with the native population, but in the latter many leaders of the educated element, though living in the towns, have come from the indigenous population, and still retain family and other connections with local chiefs or tribes. They are thus not completely *deracinés*, but are the potential leaders of capable and energetic men, already not afraid to voice their opinions as one West African native paper did, “On the whole we are of the opinion that our contact with the white man, like Dead Sea apples, has turned to bitter ashes in our mouth”. Nor can they be held in check by the missions, for in South Africa there has been a momentous growth of “Ethiopianism”, and elsewhere natives, not dissenting from religious doctrine so much as resenting continued control, have set up quite stable and progressive organizations of their own, with a religious and educational purpose, not dictated by the white men, but dominated in some cases by an apocalyptic fervour for the overthrow of the system under which they live.

<sup>1</sup> “In Africa, education is, and is intended to be, an instrument of change” (Schapera).

<sup>2</sup> *Kenya*, Leys, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Cd. Paper 2744, Ormsby Gore, 1926, p. 22.

## CHAPTER NINE

### EDUCATION--2

"The consequence was that they who had always disdained the Roman language began to cultivate its beauties . . . the new manners, which in fact served to sweeten slavery, were by the unsuspecting Britons called the arts of polished humanity."—Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. XXI.

THE MOST striking features which attract the notice of any critic of African education are reproduced, with variations, in the West Indies, in spite of the vast differences in background, in social organization and scale of these two areas. The latter certainly has great advantages—for one thing there is no bewildering variety of tongues, no conflicting theories of orthography, there are no vernaculars maintaining an unequal struggle with English; there is an old tradition of higher education, defective in many respects, but firmly established with reasonable endowments, and there is the inspiration derived from the success, in some professions, of distinguished natives of the islands, as well as the possession of an institution which, by its studies in tropical agriculture, serves not only local needs, but also those of the whole Empire. But when all is said and done, tragic facts emerge in grim similarity, primarily poverty, which curbs both the efficiency and the ambitions of individuals and communities alike. At present in Jamaica there is a wide and growing gap between revenue and expenditure, attributable to the restrictions placed upon its trade by war conditions—a gap which can be met by three methods, all of them but temporary palliatives to a critical condition: (*a*) an increase in taxation; (*b*) a cut in expenditure, affecting first of all education and social services, and (*c*) a stream of grants from the Imperial Government to balance the budget and tide over the circumstances of the moment. To all there are grave objections, put forward or opposed by interested bodies and illustrating the constant shifts to which an imperialist State is reduced in its efforts to satisfy at the same time the "proletariat" and vested capitalist interests, and, as so often happens, the bargains are made chiefly with the more clamant and influential business corporations, whose interest, as John Stuart Mill said about India, are not usually identical with the general welfare of the community. Thus the Jamaica Imperial Association and the Chamber of Commerce recently protested against the allocation of a sum of £150,000 for unemployment relief, while, on the other hand, those concerned with the constitutional future of Jamaica were alarmed lest the aid from the Central Government be purchased

at the cost of Jamaica's political status in the new constitution then envisaged for the islands;<sup>1</sup> thus the issue was befogged from two directions.

These opposing attitudes do little to solve the problem, as expressed concretely in the poverty and inadequacy of school equipment and buildings which here, as in Africa, are the joint responsibility of the Government and the different denominations, which, having been first in the field, and having laid the foundations nearly 150 years ago, still continue their work, aided by Government grants, in 1,185 of 1,662 schools throughout the islands, with this distinction, that practically all the money for educational purposes spent by missions is raised within the islands themselves, and not contributed from overseas. The record of attendance at elementary schools is far higher, as one would expect, than in Southern Africa, while it is estimated that three-quarters of the school population of 350,000 are catered for in one way or another. Even so, the Education Commission of 1931-32 reported that the percentage of illiteracy in Trinidad was 43, in St. Vincent 41. In 1881 the proportion of attendance was not much above 38%,<sup>2</sup> fifteen years later it had risen to about 54%, while for 1939-40 it reached officially 66.45%, though higher figures are recorded in some of the islands.<sup>3</sup> Even so, probably not more than 8% of the total complete the full course. The wastage that occurs through this poor attendance, incomparably better though it is than in most African areas, is illustrated by the divergence in the cost of the education of each child in attendance compared with that of each one on the rolls: £2 13s. 9d. as against £1 10s. 11d. — a comparison again all to the advantage of the West Indian, if we remember how the Kenya child is provided for. In Bermuda, however, each coloured child costs the Board of Education 6s. 8d. annually, each white child 38s.

Medical examination for all children throughout Jamaica is not yet complete, but figures exist to enable us to compare children there with the "poor white" population of Cape Colony, where, as we have seen, 31% were suffering from malnutrition. Some years ago this was slightly lower than the Jamaican percentage of 32.5, but there has recently been an improvement, which has brought Jamaica's figure down to 26%, though considerably more children there seem to be generally medically

<sup>1</sup> *Crown Colonist*, July 1941, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Jamaica, the Blessed Island*, Olivier, p. 256; *Jamaican Education Department Report*, March 31st, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> There is a certain conflict of evidence here, for it has been maintained that only a third of Jamaica's 175,000 children of school age are in attendance, even the Colonial Secretary put the figure at only 57% attendance of those enrolled (House of Commons, November 22nd, 1941, October 1942).

defective than in the Cape—67·1, compared with 45. It has been stated (House of Commons, 16th March, 1943) that in Barbados many children do not go to school because for the last three days of the week there is no food for them. Climatic conditions have something to do with this, involving a greater tendency to pulmonary diseases, while it must be remembered that the havoc wrought by hurricanes in the West Indies, more frequent than droughts or locusts, has an immediate effect on the economic structure of the whole community, extending, often for a considerable time, to every aspect of its life. There was one such hurricane in November 1939, when no less than 75% of the bearing banana trees were uprooted. Mauritius in the Indian Ocean suffers similarly.

Two great problems which are intimately tied up with education are to be found in the prevalence of illegitimacy and the lack of suitable opportunities for employment for the adolescent. The absence of harmonious parental control, or of the inspiring influence and example of a good home background, means that schools must become something much more than mere places of instruction; they need to develop into junior community centres supplying the co-ordinated activity of hand, heart and head which is so often lacking in the family life known to those children, and they must draw the best from the parental attitude where that is helpful and co-operative. A number of these voluntary or semi-voluntary organizations are at work in Jamaica—the Institute of Jamaica, aiming at adult education by courses of the university extension type, and “Jamaica Welfare Limited”, opening community centres, showing films and extending library facilities. There has also been a development among young people of the 4-H movement, with a pledge akin to that taken by the Young Farmers in this country.<sup>1</sup> The value of parent-teacher association has been proved in Britain. Its potentialities are enormous in the West Indies, where a start has recently been made in fostering joint activities useful both to the home and school, to parent and child. But one essential for this is the right kind of teacher—not merely professionally well equipped, but one with a status and outlook which will enable him to “appreciate”, and then influence, the environment in which he lives. Even in secondary schools, of which Jamaica has twenty-three, only 17% of their staffs are trained, while 30% have advanced no farther than school certificate or matriculation. Nor is it so much the low level of salaries, though these everywhere are deplorable, an

<sup>1</sup> “I pledge my heart to clear thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hand to larger service, my health to better living, to my club, my community and my country.”

elementary certificated teacher receiving from £36 to £70 p.a., a pupil teacher from £6 to £30, as the lack of any incremental scale to attract those who, anxious and able to teach, are rightly deterred by the impossibility of rising to anything like comfort. Consequently, the frequent changes, especially of junior staff, work most harm where continuity is most desirable.<sup>1</sup> Training facilities exist for all branches of the profession, the most recent of these being a Central Teachers' Training College, to be built in Trinidad to serve intending entrants from any part of the West Indies. This project had been mooted long before 1942, but apathy and opposition, especially from Barbados, prevented its accomplishment. In this scheme something may be done to break down the parochialism of the islands; thus now a nurse trained in one of the islands may find that her diploma is not recognized in the next. Another encouraging feature is the support given by the present Governor to the training of men as dentists and veterinary surgeons, while there is growing support for a demand put forward by many teachers (*e.g.*, the Trinidad and Tobago Teachers' Union) for greater Government control, and a unification of the educational system that all teachers might enjoy greater security of tenure, non-interference, more uniform conditions and the possibility of a pension on their retirement.<sup>2</sup> It has been estimated that for classes of 40 children, 17,580 teachers would be necessary, compared with 8,500 now employed, and even if salaries were raised to an average of £100 p.a., £2,000,000 compared with the present £640,000. In Jamaica 1,000 students are required in two- and three-year courses, while in 1940-1 there were but 187 in training with a yearly output of 52, and a wastage of 16%. In Antigua, of 114 now in service, only 48 are certificated, while proper requirements could only be met by 135 for average attendance, 208 for present roll, 243 for the new building programme. The attendance is on a par with that in Jamaica.

The years immediately succeeding the end of school life are critical everywhere, but especially for West Indian boys and girls, when they come to seek for work. The chronic under-employment which afflicts the islands means that the normal channels are blocked by men who, unable to earn a real livelihood, are forced to encroach upon the juvenile market, yet are paid very low rates for what is probably inefficient, and certainly unsatisfying, work. The youth leaving school, unless able at once to turn to his parents' small-holding or farm, immediately stagnates in an atmosphere of baffled hopes, and, possibly beginning his adult

<sup>1</sup> Jamaica Schools Commission, December 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, pp. 38-40.

life with a load of debt, drifts to the already saturated casual labour market at Kingston.<sup>1</sup> Only too often the heritage of slavery has implanted in him a dislike of manual work, as degrading to his conception of the status of a free man. Technical training, though it has produced some good technicians, is as yet comparatively scanty; all his ambitions are centred on the acquisition of a clerical post, and a respectable "profession". The attitude of parents is often responsible for this, sometimes going to the length of disapproving of instruction in manual work and handicraft in school. It is really a reflection of the economic dependence and servitude of their country, with an agricultural system subject to great strain and severe shocks, unequipped with secondary or tertiary industries capable of absorbing any juvenile labour as apprentices. Unfortunately the educational curriculum, still predominantly literary, and ill-equipped for any sort of sound vocational training, does little to correct this disequilibrium, for apart from elementary commercial courses, there is no pre-vocational training in industry or agriculture provided by any secondary school. At the same time there is a demand for the reduction of "book education" to be supplemented by technical training, but from the wrong motives, and voiced by that type of person who in Africa would make all native education subserve the interests of the dominant Power by providing more efficient manual workers and nothing more, workers who could perform routine mechanical processes, but would be, to all intents and purposes, illiterate in the broader sense of the word. That Jamaica can provide men with good technical training and a broad educated outlook has been proved by the employment of numbers of them in British factories, where they are engaged in teaching English men and girls to do technical work, a tuition which was, not unnaturally, rather resented at first by some of their pupils, but which on further acquaintance in the ordinary give-and-take of life decreased, as prejudice gave way to their acceptance as men.<sup>2</sup> In Trinidad the existence of the oilfields offers a certain scope for non-agricultural employment, but the weight of poverty, poor home conditions and the sapping of initiative and perseverance which bad economic conditions bring have hitherto kept the supply very scanty. The oilfields could absorb annually 100 trade apprentices, but in 1942 only eighteen applications were received for the Junior Technical School in San Fernando from boys to train for such work—even some of these had to be rejected.<sup>3</sup> It is too easy to blame either boys or their parents for being

<sup>1</sup> Col. No. 184, pp. 71 ff.

<sup>2</sup> League of Coloured Peoples, *Newsletter*, September 1941, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, October 10th, 1942.



apathetic; apathy on this scale and in such circumstances is but a sign of social and economic maladjustment—it is a dropsy in the body politic, always indicative of some major disease for the moment hidden by more obvious disfigurements.

The difficulty of transition for an alert and intelligent child from the primary to the secondary school, in which fees are charged, small though they are (from £6 to £10), throughout Jamaica, is already a great handicap; for any to take the next step and proceed to an institution of university status is almost an impossibility, for, as in Africa, no facilities exist within the whole area of the Caribbean for advanced studies, unless the prospective undergraduate is one of the few whose family can afford to send him to American, Canadian or British universities. What is required is some close liaison between our universities and the higher educational institutions overseas. The University of Durham has an affiliation with Codrington College, as it has with Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, but its preparation is predominantly for the theological faculty. Codrington, in Barbados, is a product of the generosity and vision of the Leeward Islands Governor, who also benefited Oxford, and was founded as long ago as 1716, but even during its most flourishing period in the middle of the 18th century its numbers never exceeded fifty, while in 1928 they had fallen to eighteen, rising in 1940 to twenty-one. Thus its influence is restricted both by its size and the specialization of its studies. In Trinidad the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture attracts men who are already highly skilled in their own line, and has no time to cope with the learners. Such plans as were adopted for the creation of a university of the West Indies, to be the focal point of education, the inspirer of generous ideas, the centre of research, have had to be abandoned for the time being, so that the West Indian student now can neither go abroad nor find the facilities he requires at home. Something of the same problem, as we saw, faced the Dutch East Indian, but he was, before the Japanese invasion, more fortunate in having Batavia College, to which the war at first brought an enhanced status. Perhaps what West Indian education wants is a system of Jeanes schools adapted to the island environment leading up to a Hampton Institute, closely related to the intricate complex of local life.

Let us look briefly at India. It is obvious that we cannot do justice in a page or two to the educational system and problems of a land which holds one-fifth of the population of the world, so predominantly rural that 89% live in villages, under natural conditions which isolate them from one another, and economic conditions, already described, which much more effectively militate

against education. In Britain it has now become more or less an accepted principle that any extension of the school-leaving age should be accompanied by a system of maintenance grants to compensate for the withdrawal of the child's earning capacity to assist the family income during the prolonged period of education. How much more urgent is the temptation to withdraw Indian children from school (or not send them at all), so that their minute contributions may ease the awful strain of poverty, for it is poverty that is the chief enemy—the leader in that procession of the deadly ills, malnutrition, mental lethargy, superstition, squalor, ignorance, and so on. As we saw in Africa, a poverty-stricken people is bound to remain uneducated, and the same poverty datum-line is apparent in its effect on health and educational services. Take Bengal as an example. Here the percentage of adults "very badly nourished" is 31, of children, 32.2; Bengal spent in 1935 20 rupees per head on health, compared with 40 in Bombay, 29 in Madras, 25 in Assam, or as percentages of their total budgets, 5.7%; 6.1%, 8.2%, 8.7%. For education, Bengal allocated 8.3%; Madras and Bombay, 15.7%; United Provinces, 13.5%; yet of that proportion Bengal spent far less than any other Province on *primary* instruction. In progressive (*sa*) Provinces, elementary teachers might get 20 rupees (say 30s.) a month in Bengal 5 (7s. 6d.). Of all the schools in Bengal, a huge proportion, 80.3%, were of the single-teacher primary grade, while in the Punjab and Central Provinces these figures were 27.3% and 23.2%. While 79.6% of the teachers in the Punjab had had training, Bengal's percentage was next to the lowest, with 31.3% compared with 29.5% in Assam.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible therefore to draw a very definite correlation between poverty, ill-health and an inefficient educational system, and so to realize that the primary step towards improving the last is to abolish the first. It is unfortunate, too, that certain social customs militate against education, both in the life of the child, who is often married at so early an age, and in the life of the woman teacher, who has to fight against the influence of the *purdah* system and forms of prejudice against women's activities common in Hindu and Moslem countries or communities, for the effect of competent and sympathetic women in the schools of Indian villages would undoubtedly be revolutionary. The village, again, is the real crux - there are said to be 700,000 of them, and two-thirds without a school. There is considerable evidence that English investigators at the beginning of the 19th century found established in every village a school for instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, while in Bengal there

<sup>1</sup> Statistics mainly drawn from *Social Service in India*.

were 80,000 native schools or one to every 400 of the population.<sup>1</sup> When the economic bases of the village community were blown up, as Marx explained, then the whole superstructure collapsed, and with it the village school, previously supported by village lands, which now, coming under the Zamindari system, had to pay tax and were unable to carry on their original function.

The village school in Burma had a happier history, and though it is now beginning to lose ground before the advance of the secular Western system, it has had great achievements to its credit, and is one of the sources of pride which the Burman feels over his rival, the Indian; the standard of literacy in Burma is at least three times as great as in India, and is probably due to the survival of these monastic village institutions, which taught the rudiments of mathematics, literary expression and Buddhism, and were a unifying and "clarifying influence" in the life of the country.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1931 Census the number of male Indian illiterates was calculated at 844 per 1,000, female 971, or approximately 91% of the total population; of every 10,000, 123 were literate in English, and it was possible to arrange the main religious communities in some order of precedence according to their percentage of literacy. The figures are interesting; per 1,000, Moslems 64, Hindus 84, Christians 279, Jains 353, Jews 416, Parsis 791. These show a considerable advance upon the 5.9% revealed in the 1911 Census, but at this rate centuries would elapse before a solution of this baffling problem was attained, though in Russia it has been attacked with speed and success. The figures for the 1941 Census suggest that literacy has now risen to as much as 12%, probably a rather optimistic estimate. Compare the 700 years which we are told it will take to complete the literacy of the Gold Coast at the present rate. As it is, the efforts of the schools are largely nullified, for only a quarter of the boys in attendance, and just over an eighth of the girls ever reach that standard in school where literacy might be expected,<sup>3</sup> while their life in the villages, boring and uneventful, provides an ideal method for them to relapse into illiteracy.<sup>4</sup> For learning how to read and how to write, books are an essential, but we find education so starved that books are almost an exception; and an intolerable burden is placed on the child's memory, while the single-teacher system makes it quite impossible to allow that freedom of move-

<sup>1</sup> *White Sahibs*, pp. 144, 150.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Burma*, Grant, 1940, pp. 132-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> "Literacy, like happiness, is not achieved by pursuing it as a narrow objective; it is a by-product of satisfying activities" (*Report of Vocational Education in India*, 1937, Abbot and Wood, p. 11).

ment, that relaxation, so necessary for young children, and imposes a rigidity of discipline as the only way in which the teacher can cope with the numbers under his charge. Consequently Indian schools are sedentary and immobile, with the child pinned down to a place, while all the limitations possible seem to restrain, or even crush, his wider interests.<sup>1</sup> Boys outnumber girls by about 4 to 1 (the percentage of male scholars to male population being 8.56%, of female 2.52%), but still greater is the disparity in the financial provision for the two sexes, for in this it amounts to 6 to 1. This disparity is nothing like so great as that which exists between the financial provision made in Bengal for European, English or Anglo-Indian students each of whom costs the Government about £7 each year, while the Indian has to be content with 4s. 6d.

As teacher-training is inadequate in Africa, so it is in India, where recruits to the profession cannot be sure of earning as much as the least skilled labourer, where they must work under depressing conditions of neglect, faced by numbers in their classes far too large for their real attention, or by nothing other than schools of the single-teacher type, which are practically the only ones open to girls. There is also a dangerous background of communal religious dissension, with its malevolent effect both on teacher and pupil. In some areas a local option can be applied on the question of compulsory attendance, but even if permitted, it is rarely enforced, especially in the villages where the teacher cannot afford to run counter to popular feeling, while poverty makes child-labour necessary at the most immature of ages. A speech (February 1941) by Professor K. T. Shah, the President of the Bombay Provincial Secondary Teachers' Conference, gives, by implication, a picture of the sort of life that a secondary teacher must lead. What of the elementary teacher? The Professor said, "The teacher is hardly better than a pauper, or at best a professional mercenary. . . . I want him to be placed beyond want and suffering, to be above the need of petty intrigue and degrading manoeuvring, to be beyond the reach of bribery and corruption."

If primary education has been starved, it would not be an unpardonable exaggeration to say that higher education has been surfeited—or, to put it another way, the equilibrium of primary and secondary education which depends on the maintenance of certain ratios in the numbers of their respective pupils has been disturbed by the higher proportion of students undergoing higher education, first in the secondary schools, then in the universities. The Census returns for the decade 1921-31 showed that the proportion of primary compared with secondary pupils had actually declined during this time, and that more money was being spent

<sup>1</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 261.

on the latter than on the former. It was also estimated that 20 years ago an area like Bengal, which itself had a population equal to that of England and Wales, contained a proportion of students taking full-time university courses 10 times as great as in England. There is nothing inherently wrong or vicious in this; it could probably be shown that the proportion of students in the higher education institutions of the Soviet Union was much greater, but the real criticism lies in the actual subjects of their study, the relative values which they put upon them and the ambitions which their education subserves. The vast agglomerations which distinguish Indian universities continue to grow, from a total of 67,000 students in 1922, to 117,000 in 1937—and now 137,000—and the majority of them are engaged in the study of those subjects which will fit them for a clerical post under the Government or in private concerns, not subjects which will enable them to increase the wealth of their own country, tackle its problems of soil nutrition and irrigation, stamp out its endemic diseases or exploit to better purposes its natural riches. There seems little conception of the real importance of technical education; a misbegotten attitude of mental arrogance and snobbery, fostered by the excessive value which the Government sets upon the possession of a university degree as an essential qualification for quite inferior clerical posts.<sup>1</sup> It is not solely the fault of the students; they are victims of a system which chooses natives of a subject country to do the daily work of administration, which is chary of admitting to posts of real importance, either in industry or commerce, men whose outlook might be dissimilar from that of the exploiters, and is unwilling to see vast technical advances being made at a possible risk to their own superiority.

It is true that in England we have not yet solved the problem presented by vocational training in its relation to general education, and signs were not lacking that we might be falling behind in the breadth and scope of technological instruction. The more progressive minds in India are equally troubled by this “middle-class unemployment”, for it is clear that neither here nor in Burma, where similar conditions exist, can clerical occupations absorb all the thousands who hope for a livelihood—and a “respectable livelihood”—from them. The Government of Madras recently put forward certain proposals designed to divert, at a suitable stage in the secondary curriculum, numbers of students to courses which were more utilitarian in character, but which would, it was hoped, be, equally with literary studies, an avenue to Government employment. The purpose, but not the actual administrative method, commended itself to the Inter-University

<sup>1</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 252.

Board, and so it remains to be seen what success this and other similar proposals will have. I do not believe that the urge to enter Government service through an academic, predominantly literary, training comes always, or even very frequently, from the choice of the student; he is so often the victim of a series of forces; the ambition of his own schoolmaster, the vanity of his parents, the whole mistaken idea that literary studies enhance a student's status, the lack of other suitable employment available for him once he has passed a certain age—all these things compel him to follow a certain course, especially if the monetary grants offered with it are the only means of keeping him alive, even though there has come to him that bitter moment of self-discovery that his real heart is not in the work, but that he lacks the courage to say so to all who urged him on.

Such a student would be doing himself and his country a great service if he adopted one of the plans suggested either by the Director of Rural Reconstruction in Bengal or by Sir George Schuster, both of which have service in the villages of India as a basis. Mr. Ishaque proposed that students offering themselves for matriculation should do compulsory social service in the villages for a year,<sup>1</sup> particularly as "shock troops" in the fight against illiteracy—that, indeed, has been done by students of the University of Mysore, which sent out 200 men and women, both for this purpose and to assist in the harvest by working alongside village farmers, and bringing their education as a contribution to a co-operative effort planned to make farming more efficient. Sir George Schuster's scheme means a compulsion on every university student to equip himself with the knowledge and technique suitable for rural education, and then to serve for two or even three years in a rural school—an equivalent, and a nobler equivalent, to the years which a conscript has to spend in the army in nominally more advanced European countries. The most grandiose scheme recently propounded came from Mr. Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, whose memorandum urged the expenditure of an initial £240,000,000, the training of 2,000,000 men and women teachers, 7,500 doctors, 15,000 nurses—universal compulsory free education for all boys and girls between 6 and 14, nursery schools, technical institutes, a national youth movement and employment bureaux. "These", he declared, "embody no more than has been achieved already in Britain . . . and must be regarded as the barest minimum for which India ought to plan."

We are apt to take it for granted that educational conditions in British India are better than those prevailing in the Princes'

<sup>1</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, September 6th, 1941.

States, so that it comes as rather a shock to our complacency to learn that Baroda has anticipated most of the administrative and curricular reforms which elsewhere are still only advocated, and not yet accepted. Compulsory education was introduced into one division of the Gaekwar's country as early as 1893, and has spread, so that it is now enforced throughout the State, between the ages of 7 and 12—and no fees are charged for these years; vernacular education at all stages is completely free. Compulsory physical training, technical institutes, a post-graduate Institute of Science, rural libraries, based on the system which has had such success in the Dutch East Indies—all these are found as an integral part of the educational organization, with the result that the number of schools has increased by leaps and bounds, the percentage of children in them risen to 86·6, seven-tenths, or more, of the teachers are trained; and no segregation of the 15% depressed classes from Hindu pupils is allowed in the schools.<sup>1</sup>

It is probably also in the Indian States that a more successful attempt can be made, under wise direction, to break away from the tyranny of English as the medium of instruction, and English literary studies as the main subject in the curriculum. Here, as in Africa, there has always been an economic urge to learn English, and a rather false conception of its value in comparison with the vernacular, in much the same way as vocational and technical instruction has been depreciated in a sort of intellectual competition with literary studies.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is partly the result of the plethora of examinations to which the Indian student must submit in the course of his progress towards the coveted goal of a degree. The bias in favour of English goes back nearly a century and a half, to the time when, in 1813, the Company made its first education grant of £10,000 and when education in that language was first provided by the Baptist missionaries at Serampore, in response to a demand by various castes and classes whose custom it was to take service under the Government. Even in the early stages there was conflict between opposing schools of thought, known as Orientalists and Anglicists, a conflict decided in favour of the latter by the educational minute of Macaulay in 1835, endorsed by the Governor-General with the words, "The object of the British Government should be the promotion of English literature and science"—and such it has been, more or less, ever since.<sup>3</sup>

Even the older and conservative educationalists are coming to realize that this aim, so bluntly stated and quite ruthlessly carried

<sup>1</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, April 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247-50.

out, is wrong, partly because it requires the expenditure of so much mental energy in the preparatory stages, energy which could be devoted to more rapid progress through the medium of a language already familiar to the student, and partly because a distortion of relative values occurs owing to the predominant rôle played by what, after all, is an alien language, expressing alien thoughts and conceptions. Indeed, the view is often heard that the intelligence of the student is blunted by the use of English as a medium; it certainly tends to set a lower value on the wonderful Hindu culture with its vast written records—a culture and a writing that are so sorely missed in Africa, where the problem of vernacular education would be much easier to solve if a native literature were available.

Vernacular schools have always had their place in the system, but it has been a comparatively lowly one until recently, when in the middle schools promising lines of development are being opened up, especially in the Punjab, where they are linked with rural instruction, and in the United Provinces, which also have the best record for adult education—82,590 pupils out of a total of 144,983 for the whole of British India. It is significant, however, that in Bengal, which is so badly off for schools and trained teachers, and where the population is economically depressed and unhealthy, vernacular schools are few and far between.<sup>1</sup> Hindustani, of course, carries an immense prestige, perhaps owing to the work of modern poets; but there are five or six other languages which have a good claim to be accepted for the areas in which they are principally spoken. Another great influence, the importance of which is certain to grow, is the University of Osmania, where all instruction is given in a vernacular Indian tongue and not in English. This institution, which has now passed beyond the purely experimental stage, was developed on the theories put forward by the President of the Executive Council of an Indian State, Hyderabad, and supported by the Nizam. It is important to realize that Osmania, as well as the schools at Daulatpur, Bolpur, and of the Arya Samaj, are not merely negative aspects of the nationalist reaction against Western domination, but a fertilizing influence on all Indian thought, drawing their strength and inspiration from India's inexhaustible reservoir of culture and civilization. Similarly Mr. Gandhi's Wardha scheme provided an essential minimum of education, centring round craft-work needed to equip children for intelligent citizenship.

The account which we have given of the extent of illiteracy in India is relevant to any study of that country's comparative backwardness in industrialization. It is perhaps a paradox of the

<sup>1</sup> *Social Service in India*, p. 265.



labour situation not only there, but also in Japan and China, that manufacturing industry faces a perennial shortage of labour, because the main interests of the population are in agriculture, and workers have left the countryside under pressure mainly of poverty, perhaps seduced by the rosy-coloured pictures drawn by the labour recruiter. The factory system has sprung up more quickly than the factory population has been produced, and we have already seen the large labour turnover in the factories. Somewhat similar conditions exist in Japan, where in textile mills it was estimated that the average length of stay was 17 months, and that of the women employed 66·2% remained for less than one year.<sup>1</sup> Now, while these facts hold good, more or less, for India, we must remember that the percentage of literacy in Japan is about 98, or 10 times that of India, where, on the authority of the late Director of the International Labour Organization, the workers, unable to grasp the technique of the machines owing to faulty education, seem to be afraid of them, and so incapable of getting the best out of them. Or we may compare another standard. A recent estimate for the year 1939 stated that, measured in terms of International Units of Production, 120,000,000 in India would be required to produce about as much as 31,800,000 produced in Germany at that date. Partly it is a difference in health standards, partly in sacrifice of efficiency to a low scale of wages; but also it is due to the vast disparity in the educational standards of these countries.

It is interesting to see how Indian education can develop outside India itself. In South Africa there is little that can be said, for prevailing prejudice puts higher education beyond the reach of the Indian, except for some few who are admitted to Fort Hare; coloured and Indian schools are certainly treated better than native, the grants for these, as we have described, being based on the average attendance, but conditions generally are inferior. There is, however, the case of Fiji, where, among the 85,000 permanent Indian residents, some remarkable work has been done, and striking advances made, in the last 30 years. All the evils associated with the indenture system were to be seen in the island, little or no encouragement came to them from the Government, who were (and still are) quite content to spend far too high a proportion of revenue on the education of a few European children in schools set well apart from all others. Indian self-respect was revived by the abolition of the indenture system on 1st January, 1920, while at the same time further aid was forthcoming from the Government to supplement the very real sacrifices that the

<sup>1</sup> *Political Science Quarterly*, Columbia University, Vol. XLIV, No. 2; *An Analysis of Japan's Labour*, June 1929.

Indian community, now feeling its own freedom, was making for the provision of schools and properly qualified teachers. Consequently in 1936 the percentage of boys in schools had risen from practically zero to 42, though that of girls was still only half that proportion, their numbers being about 5,640 boys, 2,350 girls in 80 schools, for only 7 of which was the Government responsible. 38·5% Indian males here are literate, but only 2·5% of the females.<sup>1</sup> Nor does vernacular remain the rather despised language that it still is in the minds of many Indians at home, for in Fiji, English is not the all-powerful competitor, while Hindustani received encouragement both from a contemporary revival in India itself, and from some progressive Englishmen in Fiji. The curriculum is still based on ideas and methods suitable for Great Britain, the atmosphere is too immobile, as it is in so many Indian schools, and women's and girls' education is still handicapped by insufficient grants and by the difficult social problems which are bound to arise in a community where, even now, as one of the legacies of the indenture system, there are only 72 women to 100 men.<sup>2</sup>

In the Western Pacific we see two systems of education following different traditions and aiming at different results—we had the British system in Malaya, the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies: in the Caribbean Gulf the American method is practised in Puerto Rico, and on the whole it is true to say that the pace has been set by the Dutch and the Americans, especially in their adaptation of methods and *media* of instruction to the environment of their pupils, and in the attention which they have given to health services as an integral part of education. In Malaya and the East Indies, as we have seen, there are large settlements of Chinese and Indians who between them have provided a great deal of the financial capital, business initiative, and actual labour-power, often at the expense of the Malay, who, in his rather easy-going way, has resented the intrusion of more pushful and commercially successful aliens; these latter, incidentally, have on several occasions been the most energetic supporters of nationalist movements within their own native countries and aided with their wealth both the *Risorgimento* against the Manchu and the Japanese, as well as the Congress campaigns. They all needed provision in the scheme of education, generally on racial lines, for primary instruction. For Malays, the Government provided elementary schools, at which no fees were charged, with their own native language as the medium, with text-books specially produced by their own experts in the central teachers' training college, founded

<sup>1</sup> *South Seas in the Modern World*, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> For the substance of this paragraph, see *India and the Pacific*, C. F. Andrews, pp. 140-7.

in 1922.<sup>1</sup> The typical Malay is a small-holder, growing rice and rubber, and, with an unusual enlightenment, his village education had for its object preparation for an agricultural life—this bias, according to a broadcast by the Acting Director of Education, had long been a feature of these schools; 573 out of 662 Malay schools in the Straits Settlements and Federated States had gardens which were treated with greater seriousness than school gardens often are, and included practical gardening, taught by teachers who had undergone a definite course in that subject at the Sultan Idris College, so that although many boys left school by the age of 12, they had had some systematic instruction.

If boys completed a four years' primary course, they were admitted, without fees, to the secondary schools, where for the first time they had the chance of instruction in English, though both the numbers of schools and the proportion in attendance were very small. There was the same economic urge to learn English as there was in Java to learn Dutch, so that native pupils might be better equipped to take their place in those employments, both commercial and official, where Chinese are now so frequently found because of their greater energy and resourcefulness. The Malay is at heart a dweller in the countryside, and, like the Burman, he runs the risk of being poor in his own rich country, the wealth of which he sees enjoyed by foreigners. Nominally he is a Mohammedan, but his religion is often a queer mixture of Hinduism and Paganism; it may be his Mohammedan beliefs, or his own natural prejudices, which have hampered very seriously the spread of women's education, which only now is beginning to take the first tentative steps, following the example of Java, where 30 years ago the ratio of boys and girls was 12 to 1, decreasing in 1935 to less than 3 to 1.<sup>2</sup>

In Puerto Rico, more perhaps than in Java and Sumatra, a greater effort is being made to relate education to primary local needs by a re-orientation of older methods, aided by new textbooks and a revaluation of the standard subjects of instruction. In rural areas a new type of vocational school, which has stood the test of ten years' experience, has been provided for children from 10 to 14, who spend half their time on the usual academic studies, and half on vocational work connected with agriculture and simple crafts, accompanied by instruction in hygiene, with the assistance of a social worker as a member of the staff, whose "task is to study the peculiar needs of the community and to

<sup>1</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, June 22nd, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced by courtesy of Colonial Secretary from *Overseas Education*, Vol. XII, No. 4, July 1941, p. 161.

initiate appropriate activities calculated to satisfy those needs".<sup>1</sup> Education is secular, co-educational and, nominally, compulsory. In South Africa the newly-established Hofmeyr School of Social Studies could well provide trained workers of this type, and it is to be hoped that nothing will stand in the way of their development, meeting, as it does, a need common also in India, and even, *mutatis mutandis*, much nearer home.<sup>2</sup>

It will not be irrelevant to conclude this section with a quotation from Julian Huxley on the education of primitive peoples: "Perhaps the greatest danger in the education of primitive peoples is that we should try to force our own concepts upon them ready made, using for our purpose educational institutions adapted to their conditions. The first essential is to relate the type of education to the local conditions, including not only the geography and economics of the people, but also their social organization and traditional ideas. The second is to relate it to the ideal you have for their future development. And the third is to relate it to the general culture of the world. But the prime necessity is to educate them for their own concrete development as a community in their own particular environment. Education should help them to make their activities more profitable, to take a greater pride in their activities, to enjoy themselves more, to blend what is good in their tradition with what is good in the tradition of Western civilization."<sup>3</sup> These words might well become the charter of all not merely native and primitive education.

## CHAPTER TEN

### FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

"For forms of Government let fools contest,  
What'er is best administered is best."

Pope, *Essay on Man*.

THE FORMS of political machinery by which Britain's Colonial Empire is controlled and administered are as diverse as the ways in which she has acquired it, but the differences are perhaps more apparent than real, for with the exception of a few isolated cases,

<sup>1</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, June 14th, 1941. For a most unfavourable impression of Puerto Rico see *Inside Latin America*, Gunther, pp. 336-8; he describes the appalling health conditions—infantile mortality four times that of U.S.A., 56% of the children not attending school, a very high population density (520), a very depressing picture.

<sup>2</sup> The various educational systems of the Pacific are fully discussed in *Native Education*, H. A. Wyndham (O.U.P., 1933) in the series *Problems of Imperial Trusteeship*.

<sup>3</sup> *Progressive Education*, Vol. IX.

the one objective which these constitutional arrangements aim at is the retention of control quite firmly in the hands of the imperial Power itself, or of those parties whose self-interest impels them to maintain and consolidate their relations with the central authority. At the same time there has grown up a certain official "philosophy" which has acquired an almost scholastic jargon in which such words and phrases as "trusteeship", "paramountcy", "Dual Mandate", "self-government when fit for it" are prominent. In order to placate the growing weight of anti-imperial sentiment at home, and the louder claims for self-government which reach London from the colonies, certain hesitant steps have been taken towards implementing the undertakings solemnly given from time to time—one must sometimes wonder if officials have always realized the full implications of the phrases they have so neatly coined, and if it is not possible for words to have in West Africa and Kenya a connotation different from that which is given them in Whitehall. Thus, as Lord Hailey says, the only principle which now holds the field is that of progressive extension in self-government; but if we apply that dictum to Kenya we find that two opposed interpretations are put upon seemingly innocent words—thus Lord Delamere, as long ago as 1918, in his first election manifesto declared, "The first duty of your representative is, I am sure, to help forward any policy which by increasing the population and wealth of the country brings nearer self-government",<sup>1</sup> while Lord Lugard thought that what the settlers wanted was not really self-government, but full control of the natives. Similarly, in the same colony the word "paramount", which has loomed so large since 1923 and was taken seriously in some quarters, as the record of the House of Commons debates shows, held three meanings, according as it was interpreted by the English settler, the Indian resident and the native inhabitant, while "trusteeship" might imply not only the protection of the native, but also the development of the natural resources of the country—a "dual policy" the two halves of which it was not always possible to reconcile, without the most careful guidance.

There has undoubtedly existed in the minds of the Colonial Office officials the strong conviction, sometimes so deeply implanted as to become an obsession, that most races, no matter what the climate they live in or their religious and cultural background, can thrive under the same institutions as have been established in Britain, and that the same principles which have been accepted and successfully translated into practice in the self-governing Dominions such as Canada and Australia, can function with a similar degree of success in colonies like Kenya or Nigeria.

<sup>1</sup> *British Policy in Kenya Colony*, Dilley, p. 55.

From the windows of Whitehall a native of the West Indies looks not unlike a native of the Gold Coast or Tanganyika—the white men who live in, and govern, these several colonies certainly share the same mentality, and at times it has appeared that a queer train of reasoning has led them to believe that what is good for the white man in England is good for him overseas, and what is good for him there must also be good for the native. But, as Lord Lugard has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> election by secret ballot, representative institutions, majority decisions, are foreign to the mentality of African and Eastern peoples, and what has proved workable in moderate-sized, homogeneous communities may soon break down when transferred to vast areas, peopled by widely differing inhabitants, arranged for administrative convenience, or by mere accident, into artificial groups, the demarcation of which may violate every fact of geography, economics and racial affinity. Thus both the organization of the judiciary and of the legislative councils bears a close resemblance to their counterparts in Great Britain, without a complete understanding of the lengthy evolutionary processes that have produced the complex organization that these really are.

On the other hand, we must not forget that some colonial peoples have absorbed very thoroughly the lessons in constitutionalism which education based on English principles has taught them. It has sometimes been asserted—with little justification—that Indian nationalists have imbibed their desire for independence from the political mentors whom they found when reading of England's struggle for political freedom. This subtle form of vanity is undoubtedly pleasing to us; but it is not true, as far as India is concerned. It can, however, be more strictly applied to the West Indies, which by culture and outlook maintain a European and often an insular British tradition in the Caribbean, and have assimilated to a remarkable degree certain political sentiments which, as Lord Olivier states, have made the West Indian a strong upholder of the rule of law and a stout constitutionalist, sometimes so intent on the securing of political rights that he has neglected the equally—or even more—important struggle for economic justice. Indeed, it has been found easier to devise forms of constitution than to secure adequate food and housing for him: in Lord Hailey's words, not originally applied to the West Indies alone, "He has asked for bread, and we have given him—the vote". And the same outlook prevails among a section of the West African *intelligentsia*, where a deeply-rooted tradition of European education has intensified, up to now, interest on political, rather than on economic, development and freedom. The

<sup>1</sup> "White Policy in East Africa", Lugard, *Foreign Affairs*, October 1930.

attainment by West Indians and West Africans of offices of dignity and importance in some branches of the judiciary and local administration has certainly proved that there is no innate inferiority of ability, but it has encouraged others to concentrate their attention and efforts on gaining advancement in the existing system instead of on the far more difficult task of acting as leaders of their own people in an endeavour to organize them and educate them to control their own destinies. <sup>4</sup>

There is, of course, the further temptation, likely to beset such men, of adopting, almost unconsciously, the mental outlook of the white governing classes, and so enrolling themselves in the ranks of the exploiters, and not the exploited. It has already been noted with what fatal facility the successful native entrepreneur can fall in with the practices of the white capitalist, and imagine, when he happens to consider the question, that there is no line of development possible for his own race except in conformity with the system of politics, and more particularly of economics, which the dominant white nation has fostered in his own country. Thus the West Indian of this type thinks first of British interests, and secondly of those of his own race, his counterpart in Equatorial Africa, of France, and then of the negro—as Father Huss wrote at the beginning of a work on the *Use and Value of Co-operative Credit for African Natives*: “We can already notice in the native a strong tendency to become rich even by exploiting his poorer black brother, and history tends to repeat itself in Africa, the rich becoming richer because they are rich and the poor becoming poorer because they are poor”.<sup>1</sup> And in the world of politics, especially in the West Indies, there tends to be a great gulf fixed—not between the whites and the native inhabitants, but between the whites together with the coloured, that is those of mixed birth (numbering up to 20% of the whole) and the truly dark-skinned negro, so that it is not difficult to enrol by judicious appointments to office or by the heady temptations of social recognition large numbers of coloured men into what becomes a dominant political and social clique. As has been stated, it is these people who, tragically enough, hate even more than white men talk about colour, for action on their part, likely to mark them out as true representatives of the negro, will mean the withdrawal of those sweet distinctions which have such value for them.<sup>2</sup> Thus while the influence of what has been called the “plantocracy” is becoming less formidable, there has grown up a class who will do their work for them, and lessen the odium, in much the same way as

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Race and Economics in South Africa*, W. G. Ballinger, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *The Case for West-Indian Self Government*, James, p. 29.

Jay Gould said that he could always hire half the working class to enslave the other half.

One of the most potent influences in the evolution of political forms in Britain has been the very strong tradition of local government in its bewildering variety of forms, even in the early days of the Anglo-Saxon settlements; the rising importance of the towns in the Middle Ages gave men considerable practice in combating injustice at the hands of local church and manor, which stood them in good stead when it came to resisting oppression from the centre. Numbers of the ablest of our politicians graduated in their local schools of politics before they went to Westminster; similarly the factories were often the desk at which men of enthusiasm and clear-cut political vision learned their first lessons and acquired their insight into the fundamental nature of politics and economics. No one could say that identical qualities were required in local government or shop stewardship or Trade Unionism as in the more complicated and comprehensive work of central government, but the apprenticeship which they passed there served them well when they entered the wider arena. In Africa there was nothing which could adequately carry out this function once the present conditions became fixed; some attempt was made to fill the gap by the scheme of Native Administration – the more correct name for that much-discussed technique of government which is so frequently known as Indirect Rule – associated chiefly with the names of Lugard and Cameron in the more developed forms in which it is found in Nigeria and Tanganyika, though earlier experiments were made in Indo-China by Lyautéy and by Goldie on the West Coast.

For the moment we may omit any consideration of the larger issues at stake in Native Administration, except to remind ourselves that its most liberal exponents claimed for it that it was nothing more than a measure of expediency, suitable only for areas in which certain almost “laboratory” conditions were found. Sound local government, inculcating responsibility and probity, was its major aim, allowing freedom for development and some assistance in “weathering the storm caused by the impact of Western civilization”. Sir Donald Cameron envisaged the time when Native Administration would disappear, its place being taken by a more normal system of local government, probably on a representative basis. He hoped that from the local units organized into Native Administrations could be formed regional councils for the discussion of common subjects, developing in the long run into a Central Native Council, from which members for the Legislative Council could possibly be drawn. When the Mandate of Tanganyika was first provided with a body of this sort, all



the members of which were nominated, vacancies were left for Africans, but it is a criticism of British rule that as yet no suitable educated Africans have been forthcoming. The interests of over 4,000,000 natives are thus unchampioned by men of their own race, although the Indian community has three representatives.<sup>1</sup> In none of the East African territories is there a single African member.

This absence of organs of local government in Africa is in marked contrast with the conditions which prevailed in rural India during the 17th and 18th centuries, when the villages were controlled by an indigenous system of councils (the *panchayat*), based on local life and satisfying local needs, and thus far more flexible and adaptable than the more centralized, more rigid methods which succeeded it, after the ill-conceived Permanent Settlement. It was a successor of Cornwallis under whom this new arrangement was shackled on to India, who declared that in the administration of justice, "compared with trial by *panchayat*, the British system is not only expensive and vexatious but totally inefficient" (Sir Thomas Munro). Rural Indian life forced upon Indians an attitude of co-operation which made their local councils as pure a form of democracy as it was possible to find, for it was originally based not on the private ownership, but on the communal possession, of land; these little communities formed "constellations" all over India and assured to the peasant cultivator a greater degree of freedom and security from want and the attentions of the money-lender than was possible for him after the "Zamindar" system was imposed. This local self-government still exists in some Indian states (particularly Mysore and Travancore) and has largely contributed towards maintaining the self-respect of the *ryot*. It is in Mysore, which incidentally allocates  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of its budget to education and founded the first university outside British India, that the *panchayat* is found still most actively functioning in the self-administration of the majority of the villages.

The scope of the work of these village councils varied considerably according to the part of India in which they acted; they were responsible for assessing the proportions payable by different classes in the community towards the upkeep of the village watch, they acted as arbitrators with unlimited jurisdiction in the classes of cases, mainly civil, which were referred to them, they administered relief in time of famine, and superintended such details of village life as roads and water supply. Their decisions were arrived at, after long discussions, by acting on what the Society of Friends would call "the feeling of the meeting", for "the idea that the will of the majority should prevail or that votes should be taken does

<sup>1</sup> *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria*, Cameron, pp. 75-130.

not appear to have existed".<sup>1</sup> The attitude of the British Government towards these indigenous tribunals or senates was characterized by a fundamental contradiction in policy; on the one hand they were so highly valued as instruments of imperial rule that even in 1838 they were established in certain wild districts of Gujarat and Rajputana to create an atmosphere of peace and community life, later to be converted into regular courts. These artificial creations were lacking in that spontaneity, that tang of native independence, which Elphinstone in 1821 had recognized when he declared, "Our principal instrument must be the *panchayat*, and that must continue to be exempt from all new forms, interference and regulation on our part".<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, British policy had as one of its aims the effecting and maintenance of direct relations in matters of land revenue with individual cultivators,<sup>3</sup> by-passing or neglecting the communal organs of ownership or superintendence. The result was that the system atrophied into complete disuse, especially in Bengal, where the village system as a coherent part of Indian life disappeared, and with it the sense of vital community. We recollect that it was in Bengal that the Permanent Settlement was first put into effect, establishing the practice of private ownership and responsibility, without the intervention or mediation of the village *panchayat*.

The impact which local government makes on the average British citizen in times of peace is probably greater than that of the Central Government for most every-day concerns: it is, of course, true that decisions of policy are made in Whitehall intimately affecting his life, especially in taxation and in the development of social services designed to combat, for instance, economic insecurity; but the peculiar British tradition of "permissive" legislation has left in the hands of local authorities a wide range of departments which deal with local transport, education, police, water, social amenities and so forth. The citizen usually looks first at his demand for rates, and is apt to grumble more fiercely at that than at his income-tax. The local authority thus mediates between him and the Central Government. War brings the "great leviathan" of the State much closer to him, but normally the Home Office and other great departments are rather remote, and he feels on more familiar ground when he can argue with his local council and read of its doings or misdoings in his local Press. The lack of some such authority would deprive him of a vital interest in his "parish pump", and though he may become too deeply immersed in that parochialism, he feels that it is something

<sup>1</sup> *Village Government in British India*, Matthai, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of British of Empire*, Vol. V, passim.

<sup>3</sup> *Problems of British India*, Chailly, pp. 129, 181.

he can cope with and perhaps influence by his protest and his vote. For the vast majority of the inhabitants of the British Colonial Empire, the autocracy which controls their lives is a far-away insensate and insensible machinery, known to them only through the inexplicable and unexplained orders transmitted for unquestioning obedience by a transitory and somewhat phantom official, often here today and gone tomorrow. For lack of information, for lack of ability to read, for lack of an education on broad lines, they cannot appreciate the purposes of, say, the Executive or Legislative Councils of a Colony, if they have so much as heard of them. The principles of representative government are beyond their understanding, the machinery bewildering—only the taxes are real, and what they mean can only too well be appreciated.

As in India, where the *panchayat* occupied a vital position in the organization of society, so in Java there existed from early times local councils—the “*desa*”—which discussed community matters in village senates, presided over by a village chief. The Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, only two years after the British Company, tended to abolish these councils as its control of the islands became stronger and the centralizing influence of the Regent extended over a wider area. The brief British occupation between 1811 and 1816 did something to check this obliteration, and in more recent years the declared aim of the Dutch Government had been to use this *desa* as the foundation for local municipal institutions, and build up slowly—very slowly—from them, through the district, eventually to some form of self-government. But the process dragged on painfully, for there was much interference by officials in the matters of local administration, which became merely the mouthpiece of the central authority without vital life of its own. After 40 years of professed adherence to the idea of expanding local responsibility, it was only in education that much progress had been made; the *desa* was responsible for the construction, organization and maintenance of the village schools, which provided a three-year course, while the Government paid at least the salaries of the teachers.<sup>1</sup> There was here a distinct parallel with the achievements of Native Administration in Tanganyika, where one of its first activities was education, and where the schools which it erected have been a source of pride to the local population, occupying a vital place in their life and giving a much greater sense of reality to Indirect Rule.<sup>2</sup> It is intended here that native authorities shall eventually be responsible for financing all their own schools—in 1941 they already maintained 41, mainly boarding. In Northern Nigeria these native authori-

<sup>1</sup> *Netherlands Overseas Territories*, pp. 26, 27, 28, 32.

<sup>2</sup> *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria*, Cameron, pp. 130-1.

ties maintained 222 elementary schools, with 10,549 pupils.<sup>1</sup> But the suspicion remained in Java that by too much interference and by refusing to accelerate the pace of local self-government, the authorities were postponing the day when, in accordance with their own profession, they would be ready to grant some form of independence in a much wider range of affairs; their slowness was therefore fostering among educated Javanese much more radical demands for complete independence. It is not without its significance that in the 1942 proposals for a new Constitution in Jamaica, the draft arrangements specified that local government must be completely re-organized before the Central Government could be remodelled—a point of view which the People's National Party could not accept, for it held that if the Centre was democratically elected and organized, then the Parochial Boards would fall into line, while the opposite process was not likely to be so effective or so prompt.

Now it is possible to make out a strong case for the proposition that part of the tragedy which has befallen Malaya was due to the neglect to provide the States with a system of local government real enough to give the Malays some sense of affection and patriotism for a country nominally their own. We must say “nominally”, for the Malay population comprised considerably less than half the total inhabitants, and the whole of the industrial life of the country was in alien hands. For the Chinese and Indians nothing was done to make them feel that they had other than a purely financial, and often temporary, interest in the States. They were thus as alien as the British Government, and probably even more aloof from the every-day life of the Malays and their problems. The Unfederated States were but pretences at independence, ostensibly controlled by their own rulers, assisted by a State Council and a British Adviser, but nowhere giving the people the remotest chance of influencing their own destinies. In one way it was autocratic parochialism run riot, for in addition to the Colony proper, already divided into three portions, there were four Federated and six Unfederated States, while the overwhelming political and social influence of Singapore still further militated against sound government. Here were rampant many of the evils we have seen in India and in Shanghai. Rigid barriers between European and Asiatic, conventional limitations on social intercourse between peoples of different races, and an insulting assumption of superiority on the part of typically bourgeois-minded men and women, the *Tuans Besar*, towards Malays and Chinese, themselves often of considerable educational attainments and personal charm.

<sup>1</sup> *Overseas Education*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, p. 11.

It is therefore but little wonder that the Malays were completely indifferent to the fate of the British Government, for while it had provided them with a reasonably sound judicial and police system, roads, some hospitals, the foundations of education, and had done them less positive harm than any other race or people in the Colonial Empire, it had left undone the one thing needful. It had not made them citizens of their own country—it had sacrificed them to the export of valuable commodities, and left them apathetic and bewildered spectators in a struggle which, however it went, could not rid them of their masters. Indeed, the very haste with which Europeans sent away their families and then not infrequently departed themselves as from Penang<sup>1</sup>, left a very bitter impression among many Asiatics for whom no such facilities were provided. It is not surprising that the bulk of the labour force melted away very soon after the Japanese invasion. We may sum up the bitter lesson of Malaya by acknowledging to ourselves that autocratic—even if benevolent—government cannot stand the strain of external aggression, for it has no roots, and that if we fail to make use of the good will and political ability which exist among advanced native peoples, we are but inviting them to lend a ready ear to the agents of foreign Powers, who are naturally apt to be lavish in the promises of independence. Burma, at least, should have taught us that—our neglect to enlist the sympathies and services of Chinese and Indians in Malaya is a lesson of the same sort—but have we any guarantee that vigorous tribes like the Ibo of Nigeria or politically conscious parties like the Jamaican People's National Party will always peacefully accept the thwarting of their aspirations, and not seek another way to realize their ambitions?<sup>2</sup>

A keenly critical African has pointed out that the evolution of a coming people, such as several of the African tribes are, especially on the West Coast, is always a shade in advance of the Colonial Government's somewhat complacent assessment of it, and that the attitude of these peoples is unpredictable by the Colonial Office; added to that is the evidence, now generally agreed to be reliable, which can be summed up in the words of a former governor of West Indian Colonies: "In the meantime such has been the energy and capacity of the Afro-European population of the Crown Colonies, where they form the bulk of the general community, that there is no department of Government, executive, administrative or judicial, in which they have not held the highest office with distinction, no profession of which they are not honoured members, no branch of commerce or industry in

<sup>1</sup> *Malayan Postscript*, Morrison, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Economist*, March 7th, 1942, pp. 310 ff.

which they have not succeeded".<sup>1</sup> To these two factors British propaganda has added a third by stressing, particularly to the African, the great part played in Nazi and Fascist theory by the doctrine of race, and implying that under either of these systems Africans would be subjected to the cast-iron regimentation of a "*Herrenvolk*", who would despise and disregard their political ambitions, their cultural aspirations, and their economic betterment. But unless British authority is more ready to translate its own pronouncements into fact, the African in time may come to see little difference between the two outlooks, and his present loyalty, often mistaken for contentment, turn into a burning desire to rid himself of all masters, whatever their professed creed may be.<sup>2</sup>

Crown Colony Government, with which we shall for the moment most concern ourselves, presents a bewildering variety of forms, related to one another and developing in some sort of evolution, from the simple, unicellular, to the complex, intricate organism—from a Gibraltar, with the crudest and most elementary governmental organization, to a Ceylon and a Malta where, it had once been our hope, elected and representative government was intended to provide a replica of that in Great Britain and the Dominions.<sup>3</sup> Between the two extremes we see Governors with advisory councils, on which at first only official members sit, then enlarged to include unofficial, as in Tanganyika. These unofficials are first nominated solely by the Governor, then by him on the suggestion of important elements in the population—elements nearly always of the dominant white race, as in the Solomon Islands, where an Advisory Council existed of 7 members, 3 official and 4 unofficial, either missionaries or delegates of the big trading companies. There are still 16 dependencies without legislatures. Then develops some sort of representation by members elected from a restricted franchise roll usually of white inhabitants, to sit upon the Executive Council, but not in sufficient numbers to outvote the official element, which is nominated by the Governor or holds its seats by virtue of its position in the Colony. This is the type found in Northern Rhodesia and Kenya; in the former there is an Executive Council of 5 officials, who also sit on the Legislative Council under the Governor as Chairman, together with 4 nominated and 7 elected members; in the latter we find 11 *ex-officio*, 9 nominated members as well as the Governor, with an unofficial minority of 11 elected Europeans, 5 elected Indians and 1 elected Arab, while 2 Europeans are appointed to

<sup>1</sup> *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*, James, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *New Statesman*, March 21st, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> For details see "British Colonies, Protectorates, etc. (Local Legislatures)", House of Commons 169, November 1938.

represent Africans. We might also include, for further example, Nigeria, where the Legislative Council consists of 29 officials, 19 unofficials, 11 of them Africans, 4 elected, 7 appointed; and Fiji, where the heterogeneous nature of the population is reflected in the composition of the Legislative Council—5 Europeans (3 elected, 2 nominated), 5 Indians (3 elected, 2 nominated), 5 Fijian chiefs chosen from a panel submitted by the Grand Council of chiefs, and 16 officials.

Southern Rhodesia is in a class almost by itself—a half-way stage between the status of Crown Colony and that of a Dominion, for while it has a Legislative Assembly of 30 members, elected for 5 years, it is not completely master of its own house, since the Crown or the Home Government reserve to themselves certain classes of legislation, definitely specified, and also the supervision of native affairs, exercised through the High Commissioner for South Africa, although now with considerably diminished powers. This anomalous position has produced the usual crop of difficulties arising from illogical compromises, especially in the resentment which the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister has long felt over the postponement of the amalgamation he has so earnestly aimed at between the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland—he resented the interest of the British House of Commons—"We had no say", he declared, "in the election of the Commons, and are therefore not interested in their reactions to Rhodesian affairs. Moreover, we see no reason why the more enlightened people who migrated and built up the Commonwealth should be dictated to by the insularity of those who stayed at home".<sup>1</sup>

It is in the West Indies that the most interesting developments have arisen, and where the future will be most carefully scanned. Nowhere has the British system taken firmer root, or the political principles on which it is based been accepted with such little questioning. The islands are in many ways the most politically advanced in the Empire—Jamaica above all—and it is surely no accident that Jamaica, too, has the most efficient system of local government functioning through Parochial Boards. Since 1884 it has had a partially elected Legislative Council, and, in common with Trinidad, the franchise roll contains a proportion of the female population. The Governor has a Privy Council, to advise but not to bind him, and a Legislative Council on which sit 5 officials, 10 nominated and 14 elected members under his own presidency. Trinidad has an Executive Council, with a Legislative Council of 12 official, 13 unofficial members, 6 of the latter nominated and 7 elected, while in Barbados is a Legislative Council of 9 appointed by the King, and a House of Assembly of

<sup>1</sup> Sir G. Huggins at Salisbury (S.R.), August 5th, 1941.

24, elected annually. The machinery would thus appear to be adequate, but it is subject to two or three disabilities, which we must outline because they are representative of conditions obtaining in many other parts.

The first of these is the grievously restricted nature of the franchise roll, due to the very high qualifications necessary before the vote can be exercised. These usually take the form of an income of certain proportions, of ownership of a stated amount of property, or the payment of taxes commensurate with the income or property. Inclusion on the roll is never automatic, but, to be valid, has to be claimed in the correct way. In Jamaica, under the constitution now in process of revision, an annual income of £50 was necessary, thus debarring nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$ ths of the population. The total enfranchised was 62,867 from a population (1937) of 1,152,528. In Barbados 1 in 37 (3.4%) is enfranchised, in Trinidad 6.5%, in St. Lucia 2.2%, in British Guiana 2.9%. But these are by no means the lowest – in Northern Rhodesia, 3,591 electors out of a total population of 1,364,000 send up 7 members *i.e.*, 0.03 are enfranchised. In Nigeria the nadir is reached, for in the Southern Province and Colony, which alone has anything resembling an elective system, 0.012 are able to use their vote; even in Sierra Leone only 3 in 1,000 have that privilege. In some colonies there are separate electoral rolls for the different communities – in Kenya, of 20,000 Europeans, well over 6,000 (33.2%) have a vote; the Indian community of 46,000 has 25.9% on the rolls, the Arabs 2.7%. In Fiji, 31.9% Europeans, who number about 4,300, vote, but of the Indians, about 90,000, only 3 in 100 are able to do so. There are thus the most striking disparities, but practically nowhere except in Bahamas, Trans-Jordan and Ceylon, under the old arrangements, does the franchise roll of any colonial territory contain more than 6% of the population, more frequently 2% or 3%. We have noted the income qualification in Jamaica – an even higher level is found in Southern Rhodesia, where the property qualification of £150 or an annual income of £100, while admitting most British subjects, effectively excludes practically all natives, 58 of whom were eligible in 1933 (out of a population not far short of 2,000,000), a number which three or four years later had fallen to 39. The Prime Minister of that country went so far as to declare that in the African's present state of development the right to vote was likely to prove an embarrassment rather than a benefit to him.<sup>1</sup> In Nigeria, too, the franchise goes with a similar income – indeed, in the minds of some officials “the ability to earn (or even inherit) money is the only criterion of political responsibility”. That was

<sup>1</sup> Rhodesian White Paper, November 6th, 1941.



fundamentally the view of one Chief Commissioner (a Mr. Whiteley), who told the Calabar Improvement League that he did not approve of reducing the qualifying income, as it seemed to him that a number of people might be added to the electors' list who would not use the vote "with a proper sense of responsibility".<sup>1</sup>

Not only does this system quite unduly favour the moneyed classes, but a complementary disqualification is added in most colonies by the disenfranchisement of any person who has been in receipt of charitable relief from any public source, usually within a period of twelve months before registration. In Nigeria and Sierra Leone (as well as in the Straits Settlements) this is extended to the ridiculously lengthy period of five years. This battle of qualification was fought in Britain nearly a century ago, and it is high time that such restrictions went—everywhere, including Barbados, where employment as "a domestic or other menial servant" at less than £1 a week is good ground for withholding the vote. And if the qualifications for voting are so high, what are we to think of those for membership of the Legislative Council? In British Guiana an annual income of £576 is necessary; everywhere the emphasis is on individual land ownership, in Trinidad of a value of £5,000; in Northern Rhodesia "no person shall be entitled to be registered by reason of his sharing in any communal or tribal occupation of lands". The dice are certainly heavily weighted.

The second disability is the realization that in no circumstances can the elective, even if it were synonymous with the popular, element be called upon to form a government alternative to that in power: thus criticism is completely divorced from responsibility, becomes captious and obstructive, and is seen to be quite ineffective when even the most enlightened proposals emanating from the elected benches can be rejected by the weight of the official vote. Under such conditions it is not likely that men of independent judgment or constructive ideas will readily come forward, when they know that their influence will count for nothing on policies already decided in the Governor's Executive Council, and that their words will be received by the appointed officials with a "tolerance" which is often impatient, if not contemptuous. If any question arises from conflicting racial interests, as over the payment of mining royalties in the Gold Coast, they can be sure that the issue will be decided not on grounds of equity, but on those of racial advantage and prejudice.<sup>2</sup> A not dissimilar division into European and African interests

<sup>1</sup> *West Africa*, November 22nd, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *Plan for Africa*, Hinden, pp. 139-44; *West Africa*, August 29th, 1942.

occurred when a motion to improve the pay of Gold Coast African Civil Servants was lost, English all on one side, Africans all on the other: the African beginner receives  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the Englishman's initial £400 p.a. (without counting his bungalow, the rent of which is not assessed for income-tax).

Worst of all is the knowledge that debates, discussions, resolutions, votes are really only make-believe. Over all their deliberations hangs the vetoing power of the Governor, who by a word can override everything, while the destinies of the Colony can be affected at will either by the acts of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster or by Orders in Council issued by the Colonial Office. Even the Governor is unable to carry out a policy unless it tallies with the interests of the sugar, oil and fruit combines, as some have found to their cost, including the Duke of Windsor in the Bahamas. In Trinidad popular talk credits the representatives of the oil industry with possessing more power than the Governor and the Legislative Council. Thus it comes about that the ostensible ruler of the Colonial Empire is Downing Street, home of an autocracy which varies its benevolence with acts of injustice, pursues a policy of subservience to commercial and industrial interests, is ignorant of many of the basic facts - or blind to them - and is fundamentally irresponsible, for it is only too true that neither in the Commons nor in the British electorate is there any large body of well-informed and enlightened opinion strong enough to press upon the bureaucracy the measures which it ought to take of its own free will.

The report of the Royal Commission on the West Indies, and the importance given to the islands by the leasing of naval bases to the United States, the political results of which may be more far-reaching than the strategic, made the Colonial Office at last realize that steps of a drastic nature were necessary to redeem the Caribbean Colonies from the depressing economic and psychological state into which they had fallen. The first steps were hesitant and disappointing, for Trinidad was chosen to be the recipient of a new constitution which left the realities of Government in much the same hands as they were prior to May 15th, 1941, when the arrangements came into force. The same high property franchise remained, a Franchise Committee was formed to consider the advisability of changes in qualifications, the need for a full adult suffrage went unconsidered; the elected members of the Legislative Council were increased to 9, while with them were to sit 3 official, and 6 nominated members, presided over by the Governor, who was to retain his casting vote. These arrangements were but a pale spectre compared with the substantial body that had been expected, for under them there was no prospect that

the elected element would ever be called to share in the work of executive control—and that, after all, is the only way by which further advance can be expected on the road to self-government. Any further amendment of these measures was to be postponed until 1948.

Concurrently with this illusory reform of Trinidad's constitution went a review of that of British Guiana, whose state is even more depressing than any of the islands or of Honduras, but in this case no less than 10 members of the 23 on the Commission for Franchise Reform were also members of the Legislative Council, elected on a very narrow franchise and acting from the narrow class and social interests which have characterized the administration and legislature up to the present. Such a body could not well be sympathetic towards changes which might result in a far greater measure of popular participation in the Government. In British Guiana we may note that out of a total population of about 330,000, no fewer than 140,000 are from the East Indies, a product of the days when indentured labour was imported on a large scale to work on the sugar plantations, still the foundation of the Colony's economy, such as it is. For some time no proposals were forthcoming except for the formation of the Executive Council, on the traditional basis, with additional members drawn from outside the Legislative Council. In March 1943 the single-chamber Legislature was so altered as to include 3 officials, 14 elected members, 7 nominated non-officials, with the Governor as President. It was not to be expected that with such changes in the air, the situation in Barbados would go unchallenged. The dominant interests in this island have long prided themselves both on the antiquity of their constitution and on its faithful adherence to the bi-cameral system which has effectively put a check to reform on radical lines, and such is their influence on the Colonial Office that the latter has agreed to contemplate no steps towards a revision of the constitution.

With such examples before them the inhabitants of Jamaica awaited with no little interest the details of the new constitution they had been promised. When these were eventually published they were found to be, in theory, surprisingly liberal, for they included not only the introduction of universal adult suffrage, but the possibility that the elected representatives would form the majority on the Legislative Council, now increased to 40, some of whom would also sit on the Privy Council. The People's National Party, however, objected to certain features which would leave the control of Government in the hands of the Colonial Office, since the Governor was still invested with powers of veto and certification which could confer the authority of law on any bill,

while at the same time no provisions were made for giving Jamaicans practice in administration or for transferring to them responsibility for the Civil Service; nor was the Governor bound to act on the advice of the Privy Council. The Party also protested against the proviso that reorganization of the central should be preceded by a reform in local government.

Certain amendments, including the abolition of a property qualification for prospective members of Council, were made, but nothing could overcome the opposition of the Council then in session, which in August 1941 completely rejected the proposals, though recommended to them by the Governor with the support of the Colonial Office. This body had been elected on a franchise comprising just over 5% of the population, and the same self-protecting instincts were at work in the minds of its members, who looked with some longing at Barbados and recommended the institution in Jamaica of a similar system, with its Second House as the bulwark against a rising tide of democratic aspirations. Fortunately the Colonial Office, for once, refused to move from the stand it had taken, instructed the Governor to proceed with the necessary arrangements for the reform of local government, the census and the consequent redistribution of seats, and declared its intention of allowing no amendments to its proposals. The one thing it did not do was to fix a date for the inauguration of the new constitution. When this has begun to function the next step will be to free Jamaica from the shackles which still bind it, not merely to the Colonial Office, but to the financial interests which have so long controlled its fruit industry, in a grip equally autocratic. In the meantime the two principal political parties in Jamaica—the People's National Party and the Federation of Citizens' Associations—themselves formulated the sort of constitution they would wish to see enacted; in their proposals, forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, they asked for a two-Chamber Government with an Executive Committee of 10 members, 7 elected and 3 officials. This body was to be responsible for the institution of all legislation, and its elected members (like a British Cabinet) to be Ministers in charge of departments, with a Civil Service under them which should eventually expand and function for the whole West Indies in a scheme of Federation.

The third stage in the evolution of the Jamaican constitution came in February 1943, when, after long consultation, the Colonial Secretary issued his draft (Cmd. 6427) for a further revision. This went farther than had been anticipated, for it provided a House of Assembly of not less than 24 members, elected by universal adult suffrage, preceded by a long-needed overhaul of the present constituencies, which are themselves based on a parochial

system bearing no relation to recent changes of population. The bi-cameral system is completed by the erection of a Legislative Council, whose members, 15 in number, are to be nominated from officials and unofficials, the latter in the majority. Then an Executive Committee of 10 members is proposed absorbing the old Privy Council, half of its members to be selected by the House of Assembly, the other half—3 officials and 2 non-officials—nominated by the Governor, who, as its President, would have a casting, but not an originating vote. The interesting suggestion was made that the 5 selected members should be Chairmen of Committees dealing with general purposes, agriculture and lands, education, social welfare, communications, the membership drawn from the House of Assembly. They would form a sort of skeletal Ministry, but without responsibility, even if they secured good training for future developments. The new constitution still retained the Governor's power of certification with his right of veto, though it was hinted that a sort of "gentleman's agreement" might be invoked in the case of dispute. This retention did not coincide with the demands of the 14 elected members on the old legislative council, who, with representatives of the People's National Party and of the Federation of Citizens' Associations, had demanded not only its abolition, but the transference to a local Civil Service Commission of the Jamaican Civil Service. This also was refused. As things are, this new Constitution represents a considerable advance, and if fully implemented there is hope that, in five years time, when its provisions come up for review, a further step forward, and a very great one, may be made.

The autocratic nature of the Colonial Office makes it sympathetic, especially in times of war, to a more extended form of government by decree, masquerading under Defence Regulations under which anything displeasing to the authorities can be punished by imprisonment or exile. There have, as we have seen, been several cases since 1939, especially in the West Indies, where the crushing power of these regulations has been brought into play in an attempt to check trade union and political agitation. We have referred to the cases of Wallace Johnson, W. A. Domingo, and Ulric Grant, and mentioned Bustamente, whose release was accompanied by severe restrictions on his addressing public meetings, his place of residence and his submission to censorship of every word he wrote for publication. If there is no vigilant and well-informed "public conscience" in the Legislative Councils of the Islands, ready to protest against the invasion of civil liberties, it is proportionally more difficult for the Colonial Office to be challenged in London, at such a remove of time and space; and

where the vast bulk of the Administrative Services are staffed by white men, as in Nigeria, where out of 365 such posts, only 4 are held by Africans,<sup>1</sup> there is all the greater need for care and the most thorough sifting of evidence before action is taken under arbitrary "defence" measures.

On July 9th, 1942, "the Secretary of State for the Colonies decided, on the recommendation of the Governor, to undertake to open the Administrative Service in the Gold Coast to Africans, and to appoint Africans from time to time to cadetship in that service". The two appointments made were both students of Achimota, who later graduated at Oxford and Cambridge. The Gold Coast Government was always more prominent than the Governments of the other West African colonies in pushing on with the admission of Africans to the administrative services. In 1938 it had 43 African officers, but they were nearly all in the technical and specialist services. Now they have the opportunity to become District Officers, whose influence on the day-to-day life of their people can be very considerable. They are still far from the prospect now open to the people of Puerto Rico, where the American Governor, Tugwell, has recommended that the people of Puerto Rico be allowed to elect their own Governor from 1944 and has expressly stated that the Atlantic Charter must be implemented there.

As in economics, so in politics, the position in Africa is rendered more complicated by the presence of two sets of immigrants—the white and the Asiatic. We have seen this in Kenya, and noticed the wide implications of the Indian question, and we see, too, how everywhere the native African is the exploited, with two sets of exploiters over him. It is true to say that he is equally inferior in respect of his political rights, be it in Kenya, where the Indian has proportionately far greater representation on an elective basis, or in Fiji, where the principle of election has been partially allowed to the Indian. This preponderance of immigrant influence is a direct reflection of their greater economic power, but it only gives greater pathos to the fact that the African has more than one master from whom he must liberate himself before he can call his soul his own. We find that where he has been able to better his economic condition, there he has gained the leisure, the desire and the psychological attitude necessary for the exercise of political activity. This is most noticeable in West Africa, both on the Gold

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Philippine Islands, where in 1931 the Civil Service consisted of 21,720 Filipinos, 466 Americans; all the lower judges were Filipinos; so was the Chief Justice and four of his nine colleagues (*A.B.C. of the Pacific*, Woodman, p. 69). We may also compare the Colonial Council set up by the French for all Senegal in 1920: three-quarters of its forty-four members were Africans.

Coast and even in Nigeria, where native political parties are beginning to formulate their own programmes. In Kenya, though the economic foundation is shakier and the white man's competition (or indeed jealousy) more formidable, part of the impulse has arisen from the very success which has attended political agitation by the white settlers themselves, through associations formed usually to oppose the colonial Government, the "subservience" of which to Downing Street is so bitterly deplored, and which neglects the interested advice of the "man on the spot"—that stick wherewith to beat Whitehall at every opportunity. The educated and intelligent native not unnaturally takes a leaf out of his master's book—only to find that a Colonists' Association is viewed in a much more favourable light than the Kikuyu Central Association.

We have hitherto kept our discussion mainly to the Colonial Empire, but it is impossible to ignore the situation in at least one of the Dominions, South Africa, because the example of that country's policy has so potent an influence over its satellites to the north, because its wealth-producing capacity is so enormous, and because it has built up an industrial system on what is a wasting asset in a land which is predominantly agricultural. We have touched upon the abolition of the Cape franchise, but have not considered the administrative system designed to carry out both local and central government. At the top are 4 Senators, nominated white people, ostensibly appointed to represent Bantu interests, but their record of opposition to the many legislative acts discriminating against the natives is not a particularly cheering or successful one. The Native Affairs Act of 1920 appointed a Native Affairs Commission, under a Minister assisted by not more than 5 members, who were entitled to make recommendations, though not able to enforce them. Not one of these members was a native; there was no guarantee that they would represent anyone but themselves, and just at the time when a spate of reactionary legislation came before the House, the appointments to this Commission were made on a strict party basis and went to men who could be relied upon to follow the party line.<sup>1</sup> Then arrangements were made for the summoning of Native Conferences, "with a view to the ascertainment of the sentiments of the Native population—in regard to any measure in so far as it may affect such population".<sup>2</sup> What do we find? The Conferences were summoned annually from 1922, but when opposition showed itself to the Hertzog legislation four years later, the Conference simply fell into abeyance till 1929, and from December 1930 to 1935 did not

<sup>1</sup> *Colour Problems of South Africa*, Brookes, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, Evans, p. 16.

meet even once. Under the 1936 Native Representation Act, which deprived the Cape inhabitants of their native franchise, in spite of the protests of every native conference and native leader with the exception of the Zulus, who had never had the vote and were indifferent, a sort of substitute vote was designed for the election of a Native Representative Council, 22 in number, 12 elected, 10 nominated, some of whose members might be natives, to sit side by side with Parliament with deliberative and advisory powers. In the Lower House of Cape Province (but not elsewhere) 3 representatives were appointed from 3 vast new constituencies, totalling 500,000, but only a very small proportion were enfranchised because of the literacy, residential and income qualifications imposed.<sup>1</sup>

For local government, the 1920 Act gave permission for Native Councils to be formed, on the basis afforded by the Transkeian *Bunga*, but so considerable were the powers that these might wield, if formed, that 6 years elapsed before any were established, with duties and privileges severely restricted by an amending Act. Within the next 8 years about 16 of these were set up, but with comparatively little influence, since the native areas in which they were to operate were too scattered for sound development. Only in the Transkei area, east of the river of that name, was there success, and that was partly due to the fact that from the date of its annexation in 1877, and more definitely under the Glen Grey Act of 1894, special provisions were made for its government, special control was exercised over its land policy, and a compromise between an elective and tribal-chief system gave some flexibility to the scheme as the area of its operations widened. On the General Council sit both native members and European officers, who are obliged to submit proposals to the Chief Native Commissioner—a necessity which deprives the *Bunga* of final responsibility for the activities it controls in public works, agricultural development and general administration, financed by local taxation.<sup>2</sup>

These Councils affect only those natives who live in some form or other of tribal or communal life—they do not cater for that large and increasing number who find their homes in the location set aside for native residence in all the large towns of the Union. It is interesting to see how reactionary “segregationist” opinion dislikes these—*e.g.*, “Native townships should be in the heart of the Reserves, though there is much to be said against great native towns; a scattered population will be much *happier*” (*italics ours*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Political Representation of Africans in the Union, 1942, passim.*

<sup>2</sup> *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, Evans, pp. 52–60.

<sup>3</sup> *Africa's Peril*, p. 223.



These urban agglomerations come under the local authority, which is responsible for housing, drainage, roads, education and so on. In locations there is every chance that the standard of education and general awareness will be higher than in the rural areas, while the congregation of large numbers of Bantu, whose sympathies with each other rapidly grow under the pressure of a hostile white environment, gives them a feeling of solidarity and of opportunity to do something for themselves. In a number of these locations Native Advisory Boards have been established, nominally on an elective basis, but more usually by direct nomination from the superintendent of the location, always a European, and usually chairman of the Board to which he himself makes the appointments, and which, in the course of its duties, may have to criticize his own measures.<sup>1</sup> This is to hamstring the work of the Boards before they can go very far, and leaves out of consideration the fact that many more natives live outside the locations than in them. For all that, conditions of life for urban inhabitants have somewhat improved, though vast alterations are necessary before South Africa can pride herself on what she has done for the Bantu in her towns.

Such alterations are, indeed, possible. In January 1942 General Smuts delivered a speech in Cape Town which may yet presage a new era in the relations between the races. It is worth quoting. "Formerly there appeared only two possible courses in native policy—complete equality or permanent European 'top-dogism'. A new principle has emerged in recent years, and had been enshrined in the League—that of trusteeship. This concept had raised native policy from the area of politics into the region of morality and ethics. Trusteeship implied that the trustee regarded the rights of his ward as sacred rights. South Africa had failed in many respects. She had tried segregation, but segregation had failed. Native housing, health and nutrition had been shamefully deficient. These problems had to be tackled. He learned that great mutual respect had grown up between the South African troops and the native troops in the North. That was a good basis for the future. South Africa's hope was that Bantu and European would live together in helpful co-operation. We want to take a holiday from old ideas which have brought nothing but bitterness and strife to our country, and try to the best of our ability to fashion a variegated but harmonious race pattern in South Africa." Of course a tremendous amount needs to be done before these sentiments can be translated into action, or even become acceptable to the majority of Europeans in the Union and adjoining countries.

<sup>1</sup> *Race and Economics in South Africa*, Ballinger, p. 22.

The 19th century in Great Britain saw the development of a Civil Service with standards of integrity and earnestness which are beyond praise and are highly respected and even envied by other countries; it is true that it was recruited by a method not greatly different from that which had for so long been followed in China, and that those successful in its examinations were perhaps more at home in the intricacies of administration than in the technicalities of science and commerce, and were inclined to regard "politics", or the art of government, as far removed from economic considerations and having little to do with nutrition and education. The success of the Home Civil Service naturally made it the model for the more recent Colonial Service—perhaps unfortunately so, for the comparative rigidity which we might regard as one of the characteristic features of later Victorian administration was copied in a newer service where flexibility, adaptability and sympathetic imagination were most needed to cope with the problems raised by control of alien peoples at many different stages of development, with none of that homogeneity of outlook which makes Home Administration a comparatively simple affair. Thus bureaucracy at one moment levelled in its own eyes all those with whom it had to deal, regarded native aspirations as almost an affront, and where it did foster ideas of advancement, usually took an ideal and a standard which was even then out-of-date. For it is true that almost the last person to whom the realization of change penetrates is the unimaginative administrator with his eyes and mind focussed solely on his desk. To him society is more or less static. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties that lie before us arises from the fact that in many points we have encouraged native peoples to attain, or at least to aim at, a condition of life which was based on what we thought was a firmly founded European conception, and have failed to realize that we ourselves are living in the midst of a revolution which is altering all our standards, many of our values and outmoding some of our most highly cherished sentiments. Thus it comes about that we are educating colonial peoples for a way of life that no longer exists for ourselves, for a set of beliefs that have no validity, and for a structure which has proved too weak to sustain the debris loading which has fallen upon it, especially during the last 5 years.

The very remoteness of the colonial administrator at home from the activities of commerce made him reluctant to interfere in the work of the Chartered Companies, whose control of vast territories seemed a cheap and even effective way of keeping them safe for British commerce without the expense of organization. The breakdown of these companies as commercial concerns meant the collapse of the police systems they had evolved for areas which

were in reality much too big for them. In the end the Central Government was forced to take over both their possessions and their problems, but quite naturally continued to use many of their officials, thus consolidating an alliance between Government and commercial organizations which had aimed at monopolistic control of the territories in which they operated. The ease with which ex-governors nowadays pass to the Boards of Directors of companies active in colonial commerce points the way to the solid advantages to be gained from such an alliance. But while what we may call the "technology" of commerce was turned to profit, it was far different with the technology of science, the achievements of which were disregarded and its triumphs sometimes gained only in the teeth of official discouragement or opposition. It is to be hoped that we have passed this phase and are ready to use our vast biological knowledge in ways that will bring improved health to colonial peoples, solve their nutritional and veterinary difficulties and by attention to their husbandry and agriculture lift them from the morass of poverty.

This ignorance of economics, and of science (including anthropology), was but inevitable, given the extremely narrow range from which the senior administrators were drawn, and so one of the most valuable reforms which the future should bring about is a widening of the "catchment area" for recruits to the Colonial Service. This would not necessarily be attained by appointing to administrative positions white men whose homes were in countries predominantly inhabited by coloured races, for we have seen how only too often a condition of "imaginative sclerosis" sets in as the result of inbred prejudices. This is rather a question of wider opportunities at home and for natives of colonial territories—the withdrawal of regulations for admission into the Colonial Service which make it extremely difficult for any non-Europeans to get a footing within the sacred enclosure except by what amounts to an act of grace on the part of the Colonial Secretary. It would perhaps be too much to expect Britons to acknowledge that they have not a monopoly of administrative genius and that other European nations have particular gifts and experience which would be of value. Scandinavia, for example, has given the world an object lesson in the organization and running of co-operative societies on a scale far larger than the early pioneers of Rochdale probably imagined was possible. Certain parts of Africa, the Gold Coast and Tanganyika, for instance, offer admirable fields for this. Could we rightly object to using the services of a Swede or a Dane in this connection? Certainly neither of these countries could well be suspected of harbouring imperialist ambitions; their development of agricultural co-operatives, in which Great Britain is

possibly at its weakest, would give them an immense advantage in their treatment of similar problems in Africa. Switzerland has shown how a federation of cantons, with racial and religious differences, can succeed; is there no area in the Colonial Empire, by the West Indies, where the acquisition of similar experience might be worth the shedding of a few insular prejudices?

War-time conditions in Great Britain have led to the division of the country into a number of Regions which for certain purposes are controlled by Commissioners armed with very wide powers, and in some respects able to override the many local authorities within their area. One of the results of this is to reduce, even if slightly, the mass of correspondence on matters of detail which normally goes to Whitehall, and it enables the Commissioners to plan for fairly large and generally homogeneous areas in the matter of some war-time services. The advantages of the system have so far been recognized that in discussions for the replanning of local government after the war the point has been repeatedly made that the regional organization ought to be maintained or the country grouped together in units which will bear some resemblance to it. Local government is seen on a wider scale, and its planning to be more efficient if it involves more extensive areas. Now, it is true that we cannot press too closely the analogy between the war-time organization of Great Britain and the Colonial Empire, but amid the 55 units which comprise the latter, each with its full complement of administrative services, it should be possible to re-group them into regions with cognate problems and similar conditions. The first and most obvious area for such an experiment is the West Indies; the 9 independent administrations now involve a great deal of expenditure which could well be pooled; their institutions are largely akin; if the process of constitutional reform can be carried through, there is some hope of uniformity in their internal arrangements; their dependence on a few staple crops and products—fruit, sugar, oil—suggests co-operative marketing schemes; the united front which such a federation could present, under democratic leadership, to combines such as the United Fruit Company, would be more effective than the easily defeated isolationist opposition they can now present. The example of Switzerland has shown us that there need be no sacrifice of essentials; indeed, the differences separating the French-speaking Catholic from the German Protestant cantons are probably greater than between any two of the southern West Indian islands.

One further advantage of some such scheme as this would be the growth of a West Indian Civil Service, whose personnel would be recruited from the islands themselves, and by a gradually

widening transfer of powers, as experience and judgment grew, pave the way for the time when the complete government of the Caribbean area could be undertaken by native officials. The establishment of a University would give some focal point for higher education, which is essential for the supply of fit persons, and the realization of the economic unity of the whole area would encourage the provision of a far better system of transport than is now available. Another area where a unified and native Civil Service could well be organized is the West Coast of Africa: this would supply administrative material for Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia, and produce some cohesion of purpose and outlook, and better enable economic policies affecting cocoa, palm-oil, tin and even rubber to be carried into effect. The appointment of a Resident Minister of Cabinet rank shows that war-time conditions call for some such unification, and is in itself the best argument for the continuation and development of some like system in times of peace. The educational achievements of many West Africans are already high; the growing influence of Achimota, and its eventual elevation to university status, would match the ambitions which its founders had for it, and one day perhaps the shade of Guggisberg would rejoice to see a descendant of Aggrey in occupation of Government House. There is nothing sacrosanct in the present division into colonies, no such thing as a "Nigerian nation" or a Gold Coast "national" spirit—as Sir Donald Cameron pointed out, the very name "Nigeria" is ours, not theirs, so that no deeply-rooted sentiments would be violated by administrative re-arrangements. The weaker units, such as the smaller islands in the Caribbean, or Gambia, would stand to benefit by their inclusion in some centralized form of political and economic organization.

The amalgamation of the East African colonies and the mandate of Tanganyika has long been discussed, and here we come up against the inflexible opposition of the settler element in Kenya to foregoing the privileged position which they have secured and mean to retain. Their influence is probably strong enough to prevent the amalgamation of Uganda and Tanganyika on the ground that the native policies in operation there would probably prove an effectual bar to the settlers' dream of a white dominion throughout East Africa.<sup>1</sup> To them Native Administration is anathema; they would, indeed, welcome the extension of South African principles much farther north, in spite of the practical impossibility of reproducing in Tanganyika or Uganda the same methods of land tenure and segregation into Reserves. Yet there is already some measure of economic union. Makerere will in

<sup>1</sup> *My Tanganyika Service*, Cameron, pp. 224 ff.

time become the University of East Africa, in spite of Kenya's opposition to native education; and it is certain that when the problem of India is solved, its repercussions in Africa will be tremendous. Nor indeed is the economic condition of the settlers based on such a secure foundation that they can always afford to present a die-hard attitude towards political and other changes bound to come.

There is one other area which might suitably be the scene of a great experiment of amalgamation and federation—the islands of the East Indies.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps somewhat premature to talk of them while they are still in the possession of the Japanese, but if the same attitude is displayed by their present conquerors and the same policy put into effect as in Formosa, Korea and Manchuria, then we can say without hesitation that the rule of Britain or Holland is infinitely preferable. The Malay Peninsula, Java, the Celebes, Borneo and Sarawak form an economic unit of immense actual, and still more immense potential, wealth; they are already partly internationalized by the great holdings, for example, by British investors in the oilfields of the Dutch possessions; the Dutch Civil Service offers places of importance and prestige to other than pure Dutch citizens, while the application of science to agriculture and the enlightened system of land tenure and rural credit show what could be done were the field of their effective operation still further extended. Cultural and commercial centres already exist in Batavia and Singapore, and the native intelligence of a gifted people, such as the Javanese, would provide admirable personnel for a Civil Service.

It has been a common complaint against the British Colonial Service that many of its administrators have never had time to acquaint themselves with the peculiar problems of the district they were sent to control before they were whisked off to service in some other area with a set of conditions totally different from the one to which they were just becoming acquainted. Thus one governor, whose personal interests and professional training have lain in the Levant, has found himself promoted to the governorship of Northern Rhodesia, with a political and economic climate of quite another order. There may certainly be advantages in occasionally having a completely fresh mind brought to bear upon the problems of a Colony, but the re-grouping into larger units of allied colonies would at once provide positions of greater responsibility for the able governor and ensure a greater degree of

<sup>1</sup> This would go even beyond the proposed creation of a *Dutch Federal State*, such as was envisaged by the Dutch Queen in December 1942, when she outlined a Commonwealth proposal, with complete freedom of conduct for each part in internal affairs, with readiness to render mutual aid.

uniformity in policy. And if fresh minds are required, there would seem to be no insuperable obstacle to the appointment of Dominion statesmen, say from Canada or New Zealand, to some of the posts which are now reserved for those who are sent, often without previous experience of overseas government, from Britain. The beginning has indeed been made in the appointment of Mr. Casey to Bengal. The Dominions could also give very valuable help from their much better equipped technical departments, which have specialized in the assaying of minerals and other highly skilled occupations. The setting-up of a Joint Colonial Council could well serve for the interchange and pooling of ideas—if the exigencies of war have led to the formation of a Pacific Council, then the opportunities of peace would be vastly increased by some similar machinery of international discussion. Already an Anglo-American Commission has been set up to encourage and strengthen social and economic co-operation in the Caribbean, advising its Governments on questions of labour, agriculture, housing, health, education and finance, each of the two countries concerned nominating 3 members, under 2 co-chairmen, the first of these being Sir Frank Stockdale and Mr. Charles W. Taussig, but unfortunately containing no native representative of the areas whose interests they are supposed to promote. Britain has at last realized the need for a more extensive knowledge of the conditions which prevail in her colonies, by the appointment of a Colonial Labour Advisory Committee and a Colonial Research Advisory Committee, but it will need all the pressure that an enlightened public opinion can bring to bear to prevent these bodies from becoming as ineffective as the majority of Royal Commissions have been—and one way would be to invite citizens of other countries to join on an equality in their deliberations.

In his admirable study *Conditions of Peace*, Professor E. H. Carr has diagnosed the situation in Europe as in need of a new orientation or development. This seems to offer some parallel to the problems we have been discussing. He sees the need of a larger unit than the nation for military and economic purposes—a unit within which the largest measure of devolution should be effected for other purposes, corresponding to local differences in tradition, law, custom and culture; this re-organization, intimately connected with the demand for national self-determination, he declares only possible within a new framework of mutual military and economic obligation. All else depends on the successful solution of the economic problem—in Europe as in the colonial possessions of all the Powers. Consequently the view he upholds lends support to any re-grouping of the present unlinked units into a system of “major constellations”, but without that rigidity

of administration, that extermination of native "idiosyncrasy" which has already done so much harm. These units would be held together by some force of economic gravity—they would no longer pursue policies mutually antagonistic; they would preserve their own outlook within the larger framework, acknowledging their debt both to their fellow-members and to other larger groups similar to themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In any discussion of the problems of colonial government we cannot leave out of consideration the possibility of restoring a Mandatory system of the type that the League of Nations set up and endeavoured to work. It is but flogging a dead horse at this stage of the day to expatiate on the weakness both of the League itself and of the various allied and subsidiary offices and organizations connected with it. Opinions are diametrically opposed as to the value of the Mandate system—we have been told that the principle of publicity was responsible for the exposure of much that otherwise would have gone unchallenged, that the presence on the Mandate Commission of parties not interested in colonial possessions constituted in fact submission to an international jury, that in conjunction with the International Labour Organization the study of colonial labour problems and the drafting of labour conventions went on apace. All this hardly alters the fact that "new mandate was but old colony" writ otherwise, for the Mandates Commission was dependent for its information on what was supplied by the Power on whom it sat in judgment, the native populations had no direct right of appeal to the tribunal other than in writing, with the Mandatory Power as intermediary, far less had any native the right to a seat on the Commission, the various prohibitions against preferences in trade or arming of native levies were avoided by a variety of means, direct or indirect. The trouble really was that the Mandate system tended to think of colonies in terms of politics, whereas the greater problems—which are not concerned with the mere possession of territory, but with raw materials, exports, imports, internal markets, standards of life, education, nutrition—are couched in quite different terms. A Mandate System to be really effective would need to be accepted by every Power, both the possessing and the dispossessed, and to be extended to all those colonies belonging to other Powers which were not ripe for genuine self-government. From this stage some would go on to a form of Federal Union, by the internationalization of colonies, administered by a Colonial service recruited from any or every national State. These projects in their developed form are not yet within sight of becoming practical politics, and to a certain extent are vitiated by the refusal to

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.



admit the real desirability of the complete independence of native peoples. Fundamentally one doubts if such words as "trusteeship" do much else than darken counsel and blur the real issue.

Certain somewhat specious arguments have been advanced, alleging that there is a remarkable unanimity among Africans, for instance, against the transfer of the colony in which they live from British to some form of extended international control as is envisaged by supporters of Federal Union. It is perhaps a little ironical that we should heed this argument while remaining deaf to all the appeals which come, shall we say from Southern Rhodesia, for more land in native settlement, or protests from Kenya against racial discrimination. It would be easy to prolong the list, but we should observe in passing that it is shrewd political instinct on the part of the protestants to prefer to have to deal with one known master, who is more likely to be approachable, even vulnerable, than a Commission representing a new sort of "inter-imperialism", all the members of which are interested in maintaining some form of Colonial system. The changing relations of these Powers, their varying fortunes, their comparative strength *vis-à-vis* each other, would, over a decade or two, so alter as to create complete instability and uncertainty in the colony-governing commission, and at the same time increase the tensions which already exist, not only between Powers competing with each other for control over raw-material producing areas, but also between those Powers and their colonial subjects. It is more than likely that all the members of such commissions of international type would be white men, all the populations over whom they ruled men of colour, with the inevitable result that the alignment of white versus black would be more pronounced than ever and the possibilities of collision on a racial or colour basis vastly increased.

In his book on Curzon<sup>1</sup>, Harold Nicolson has an interesting passage on imperial psychology: "The doctrine of force, particularly in its application to 'backward races', is based not merely upon overwhelming physical power, but on certain moral forces behind that power. The peoples exercising that authority must believe in its ethical justification and must possess a united will for its continuance. The peoples upon whom that authority is exercised must, for their part, be convinced of its inevitability and must never come to regard it as an outrage on individual dignity . . . the subject races no longer took its inevitability for granted, and what was far more serious, they had come in recent years to regard national subordination as a personal affront. Nationalism had thus become both objective and

<sup>1</sup> Curzon: *the Last Phase*, pp. 69 ff.

subjective—both a political and racial aspiration and a personal religion. It had become inflamed by the emotions of a self-conscious individualism.” The symptoms which he mentions are all to be observed in the present situation. The employment of native troops in the last and present wars might reasonably suggest to any one who gave a moment’s thought to it that the imperial Powers were not so strong that they could afford to dispense with the help of subject races. The more recent searchings of heart at home at the more obvious of our failures and shortcomings have cast doubts on the “ethical justification” of a system and policy whose results are so varied. While there is little trace of a racially nationalist outlook in the mass of African people, the growth of “Ethiopianism” in religious organizations, the ramifications of the “Watch-Tower” movement and the rise of radical political parties in Nigeria and West Indies, all bear witness to a stirring in the hearts and minds of colonial peoples. The attitude of many white people, who seem to be their own worst enemies when they leave their own country, is undoubtedly a “personal affront”. We appear to stand on the watershed between two ages, and our preference for one side or other of the Great Divide may be dictated by comparatively small details, in the present hesitant state of mind.

“Personal affront” is a feeling engendered not merely by acts of social and political injustice, but by the whole attitude of the imperial Power, summed up in such a word as “trusteeship”, once so beloved of administrators. Lord Hailey expressed this point in a speech in the House of Lords (May 20th, 1942), in the course of which he said that no one could deny that the sentiment of trusteeship had played a great and most beneficent part in the development of our system of civil administration in the Colonies, but trusteeship had today a new and more positive meaning, which had already been expressed in legislation, and would need to be expressed still further as time went on . . . and there was another point. The use of the term was irritating to Colonial people. It was intensely unpopular in India. It was becoming equally unpopular in the Colonies, for it had implications on which it was unnecessary to enlarge, but which, if he (the speaker) were a native of the Colonies, he would equally resent. Related to this statement by Lord Hailey was the speech already referred to made in January 1942 by Field-Marshal Smuts in Cape Town, in which he emphasized the breakdown of “Segregation” and pleaded for a new conception of Trusteeship, particularly in the light of the economic problems of South Africa. Professor Hoernlé has pointed out that there is a vast difference between trusteeship of an “asset” and trusteeship of a “human being”. Up to now the

Bantu, and native colonial peoples generally, have been assets, reckoned as part of property along with all the other resources and implements of an estate. To transfer them from the category of "*Organa*" or instruments, as Aristotle would say, to that of Man, with fundamental rights to "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", means a complete re-orientation of our thinking and of our appreciation of our fellow-beings. Nor is there room for a conception of them as "child-races". This form of patronage is all too common. It can be expressed in the words of a Member of Parliament who summed up the African in these words (June 24th, 1942): "The African peasant is a simple, primitive soul whose wants are relatively few. Apart from security and justice, he wants food, shelter, clothing and small luxuries and trinkets with which to delight and bedizen his women-folk. Food is to be had in abundance. It is no great problem. A grass hut can be built in an hour or two . . . the formidable climate and the great fecundity of his country make the native African indolent by nature . . . he needs a material incentive." To the ignorance and prejudice revealed in these words can be traced many of the troubles which now beset us.

"Parallel development", "Trusteeship", "Dual Mandate", "Paternalism"—these are some of the *clichés* so plentifully found in the history of colonial administration. In their day no doubt they meant something. "Senior and junior partnership" is perhaps the latest in the list. There is one other addition which we must briefly consider. The publication of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 was received with an enthusiasm which may have surprised even those who were responsible for its drafting. More was probably read into it than its authors intended, especially into Articles Two and Three. The first of these declared that Britain and America desired to see no territorial changes that did not accord with the fully expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and the other that they respected the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they would live, and that they wished to see sovereign rights restored to those who had been forcibly deprived of them. On the day following the publication (August 16th, 1941), the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee), in a speech to West African students, said that the Labour Party had always been conscious of the wrongs done by the white races to the races with darker skins. "We have always demanded", he went on to declare, "that the freedom which we claim for ourselves should be extended to all men. You will not find in the declarations which have been made on behalf of the Government of this country on the war any suggestion that the freedom and social security for which we fight should be denied to any of the

racess of mankind". Those solemn statements seemed explicit enough, and immediately suggested that the new era envisaged by the Charter would dawn upon colonial peoples as surely as upon the occupied nations of Europe. It was therefore a great disappointment, if not disillusionment, when the Prime Minister stated that the President and he had Europe "primarily" in mind, and that the Charter did not include the Colonies in its scope, for Europe constituted "quite a separate problem from the progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British Crown".

If this is true, then the separate position of the Colonies should have been categorically stated from the very beginning. But Africans cannot recognize their exclusion, if only for the fact that they are themselves bearing a tremendous share of the burden of the war: their man-power and wealth are being used to the uttermost, the closing down of so many of the normal channels of trade, while it has adversely affected many of them, has also made necessary a complete re-orientation of their economics, and brought them into closer contact with other parts of the world not subject to Britain. The protecting umbrella of the United States covers British Colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific-- the political results arising from the establishment of American bases in the West Indies have yet to be assessed. The propaganda of the Japanese in the East Indies has for its main theme the impossibility of justice and equality from the white races because of their unalterable racial prejudice. The example of China, and still more of Russia, has sunk deeply into men's minds everywhere. All these facts make it impossible to discriminate between freedom for Norway and freedom for Nigeria and Jamaica. If the future peace and security of Europe depend on a rational planning and control of the economic resources, and a more rational and complete satisfaction of their economic needs, the same holds good for Kenya and Malaya--with one important addition. The even greater diversity of development and tradition makes essential greater flexibility, greater understanding and an even greater display of constructive imagination. But it can never mean that the personal dignity, the responsibility of citizenship, the social justice and security, or the status of genuine self-government can be any less for these people than it can be for the Czechs or Poles--or British and Americans.

We have grown accustomed to thinking that the future peace of the world depends on the degree of co-operation and harmonious working between the peoples of the United States and of Britain. This in its turn depends partly on official policies, but even more on the sentiments which the unofficial, ordinary, men

and women hold about each other's country and inhabitants. Two warnings have recently been given us—one relating to the impression which the united peoples might make upon coloured races. Miss Pearl Buck, perhaps the best known of the more popular writers on the Far East, at a New York luncheon (March 1942) said that an England or a United States "walking together side by side in majesty" (she was quoting Mr. Churchill's words) might only mean to the coloured peoples a formidable white imperialism, more dangerous to them than anything even a victorious Japan could threaten. The other warning came from the American Ambassador to Britain in a speech to the Royal Empire Society on July 28th, 1942. He was referring to colonial policy as it affected Britain and America: a careful survey of public opinion in the United States showed that there was more divergence of viewpoint on British colonial policy than on any other subject that divided them. The American reactions to our Indian policy are, of course, well known. What, therefore, is of paramount importance is the adoption, first of a colonial policy which will remove every possible criticism from outside nations—include them in responsibility for the welfare of those in whom they feel they have an interest—and then the further development of a new philosophy of conduct and purpose by the white races which will make it impossible for them to be regarded by any hitherto subject people as exploiters, masters or even slave-drivers.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### ECONOMICS—DEVELOPMENT OR EXPLOITATION?

"The government of the Carthaginians is oligarchical, but they escape the evils of oligarchy by enriching one portion of the people after another whom they send to their colonies."—Aristotle, *Politics* 2, 11, 15.

"**R**EMOTA ITAQUE iustitia, quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?" Such was St. Augustine's question, 1500 years ago<sup>1</sup>; today we may alter "regna" into "imperia" and translate: "if fair-dealing be taken away, what are empires but brigandage on a large scale?" It would not be a difficult task to bring forward proof of this statement, but we need to look a little more deeply and understand the processes which have produced the modern forms of empire and their characteristics. We shall find them pre-

<sup>1</sup> *De Civitate Dei*, Bk. 4, Ch. 4.

dominantly in the field of economics, but we shall restrict ourselves mainly to a survey of present discontents, without elaborating the historical processes which have produced them, except to refer to the theory which Hobson propounded 40 years ago, to the later approval of Lenin. The latter summarizes imperialism as marked by the following five essential features:<sup>1</sup> (a) The concentration of production and capital, developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive rôle in economic life. (b) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capitalism", of a financial oligarchy. (c) The export of capital, as distinguished from the export of commodities, on a large scale. (d) International monopoly combines of capitalists are formed which divide up the world. (e) The territorial division of the world by the greatest capitalist Powers is completed.

On the whole Lenin was more interested in the repercussions of imperialism upon the annexationist Powers and its relation to the development of the working classes within them than in the fortunes and prospects of the colonial subjects of those Powers; but one truth has recently emerged—the essential solidarity, for good or ill, of producers and consumers the whole world over. The growing intricacy of economic organization and the agglomeration of ever-increasing areas into both political and economic units make the most remote inhabitants of primary-producing countries dependent on policies, decisions and conditions taken or prevalent at the other end of the world. The labour of the West Indian, Nigerian, Bantu, is essential to the standard of life maintained by the textile or steel operative in Britain or America; the latter in a reciprocal way determines the poverty or prosperity of many a remote tribe, so that the whole framework of life, both for industrial workers in highly developed countries and for agricultural producers in tropical lands, is set within world-wide conditions, and subject to violent changes which neither can understand and both resent. This division into producers and consumers is only a rough-and-ready approximation, because each side naturally both produces and consumes, but it will serve at this point, especially to emphasize that the stress in modern capitalism has been laid on production at the cheapest rate, and that the potentialities of men as consumers have been under-valued in comparison with those as producers. If we represent world industrial production in 1860 by the index figure of 8, in 1930 we should find that it had risen to 126, while the population of Europe and America which produced the majority of these goods over that period rose from approximately 283,000,000 to 550,000,000 in the

<sup>1</sup> *Imperialism* (1916), London, 1940, p. 81.

case of Europe; from 31,500,000 to 122,000,000 for U.S.A. The vast increase in the means of production brought about by technological advance (which in Great Britain increased the output of each engineering operative between 1930 and 1935 by 57%, or of textile by 37%),<sup>1</sup> the operation of private profit as the main incentive, the growing profitability of investments abroad compared with those at home—all these led to a vast accumulation of capital, an insufficient distribution of consumers' goods in the industrial countries, an expansion into new areas where capital could find a more remunerative field of investment.<sup>2</sup> British foreign long-term investments in 1914 were nearly three times as big as they were in 1870, French and German nearly four times, and since the risks abroad were greater, higher returns were expected—and secured. It was not long before purely political control followed upon economic domination, in certain select areas; for capital in search of investment does not necessarily, or even generally, pay too much attention to political boundaries—South America is politically independent, in a nominal sort of way, though economically she is almost a colony of the United States and Britain. The areas of colonial expansion had to be outside the care, control or interest of other Great Powers; thus the Monroe Doctrine threw its protecting cloak over the South American Republics; Persia was too close to Russia to be completely annexed. China was perhaps too big a problem, with her essential weakness as yet not fully disclosed. It was left for Africa to be the scene of this last stage in the evolution of finance capitalism. During the years 1877–1922 the Western Powers acquired about 16 times as much territory as during the preceding 62 (i.e., since 1815) and 25 as much as in the succeeding 17 (i.e., down to the present war).<sup>3</sup>

The colonies thus acquired were needed both as sources of raw materials for industrial processes and as markets for the disposal of surplus goods and idle capital, but the same unequal distribution of goods for consumption occurred in the newly-won territories as in the metropolitan countries, with the dilemma consequently still unresolved; but since the price of all those things which go to the making of producers' goods was cheap (land,

<sup>1</sup> In 1855, in U.S.A., 4½ hrs. of human labour was needed to produce one bushel of corn; in 1895, one hour of human labour produced six bushels (*We, the People*, Huberman, p. 206).

<sup>2</sup> In 1930 it was estimated that American *private* investments abroad were: Canada, \$3,942 millions; Europe, \$4,929; Mexico, etc., \$1,000; South America, \$3,042; West Indies, \$1,233; Africa, \$118; Asia, \$1,023; Oceania, \$419 (Huberman, *op. cit.*, p. 258).

<sup>3</sup> *In Quest of Empire*, W. C. Langsam (Foreign Policy Association of U.S.A.), p. 52.

labour, raw materials), capital, being comparatively scarce, earned large profits. When we add the prestige factor and the advantage of having linked currency areas, we can see how potent was the lure of colonial expansion, and how handicapped were the late-comers in this race. To the manufacturing oligarchy of the Western countries the words of H. M. Stanley had an irresistible appeal: "There are forty millions of people beyond the gateway to the Congo, and the cotton-spinners of Manchester are waiting to clothe them. Birmingham foundries are glowing with the red metal that will presently be made into ironwork for them and the trinkets that shall adorn those dusky bosoms, and the ministers of Christ are zealous to bring them, the poor benighted heathen, into the Christian fold."<sup>1</sup> It was not long before the real motives and purposes were rationalized, or disguised into something much more respectable! Lord Lugard wrote (with less hypocrisy) that it was in order to foster the trade of this country and to find outlets for our manufactures and surplus energies that we undertook East African responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

As we said before, it was not always necessary for an area to come under the direct political control of either Great Britain or the United States for it to be an economic appanage of their finance capitalism. John Gunther in his bird's-eye survey of South America quotes the figures for foreign investment for each of the republics, and with them gives some broad details about the wages of agricultural and industrial labourers, together with the percentage of illiteracy. It is from *Inside Latin America* that the following facts are quoted. The direct American investments in mines, utilities, packing plants, petroleum, etc., he puts at £568,000,000, with an additional £322,066,359 by way of loans, on 77·2% of which there is whole or partial default. The most powerful of the major republics is probably the Argentine, but her development was largely due to European capital, the bulk of which was supplied by Great Britain to the tune of £400,000,000, mainly sunk in railways and transport undertakings, 78% of which are British-owned. The wages of agricultural labourers (*peons*) and cattle-ranchmen (*gauchos*) vary from about £2 14s. to £3 10s. a month. In Brazil, though foreign investment is not quite so high, because there are as yet not the same opportunities, wages are lower, the poorest agricultural labourer receiving as little as 2½d. a day, rising for unskilled industrial work to 3s. 1½d., for skilled to 4s. 10d. In Chile, where nitrates and copper have attracted great foreign attention, the U.S.A. has sunk over £76,000,000, out of a total of £140,000,000,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Man's Worldly Goods*, Huberman, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *East African Empire*, pp. 379-82.



of which £36,400,000 is in loans, making the country's foreign debt *per capita* the largest in the world. Wages vary from 4d. to 1s. 2d. a day, while half the population is illiterate.

In Mexico took place the most spectacular struggle of modern times, in which a national Government tried to rid itself of the tremendous incubus of foreign investment and foreign debt. The total of this was indeed overwhelming; it was largely due to the policy of Diaz, who maintained himself in the office of President for the record length of 33 years, in the course of which the railway mileage increased from 400 to 15,000, the production of silver by 500%, of gold by 2500%; from 1901, oil was worked, at first under Standard Oil, then by Mexican Eagle. Foreign investments were reckoned at £500,000,000.<sup>1</sup> Mexican Eagle was British-owned, and controlled 70% of the country's oil output, earning between 1934 and 1937 an annual profit of 17% of the total invested fixed capital, estimated at £50,000,000. American investments, at £30,000,000, were not much less. Mexico herself produced more oil than the whole of the British Empire. She also produced 31% of the world's silver,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of which was in American hands. In addition,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of her private land was owned by foreigners, again mainly American. The obverse of the coin was as pathetic as might be expected. Inflation in the oil-zones forced an increase in the cost of living between 1934 and 1939 of 89%; the national income of about £7 per head compared favourably with that of India, as did the illiteracy percentage of 60; the death-rate was said to be the second highest in the world. The internecine struggles in Mexico—financed, according to popular report, by contending oil companies—the dead hand of the Church, the accumulation of vast estates, the tribute paid to foreign *rentiers*, all combined to stimulate a national revolution which, greatly to the indignation of American and British capitalism, expropriated the companies and confiscated many large estates, the Americans losing a million acres. This movement was not accomplished in a day; from 1917 onward it had been gathering force, it broke out into great activity in 1925, and eventually succeeded in many of its aims after conflict with American and British investors, supported by their Governments and the Roman Catholic Church. Today many South American republics look up to Mexico.

Peru is an even more striking example of the tentacle-like grip in which a country may be held by foreigners, while still retaining a nominal political independence. "Where the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together." American interests specialized in oil and minerals, controlling 80% of the one and nearly all the latter, as well as 24% of the sugar. Britain manages

<sup>1</sup> *How Empires Grow*, Horrabin, p. 18.

the railways, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cotton; Italy has cast her shoe over electricity, light and power, and through a powerful bank monopolizes  $\frac{1}{2}$  the banking business; 43% of the sugar is in German hands, while Japan dabbles in sugar and cotton, buying  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the latter crop, and as much of the strategic minerals as she can, these including gold, silver, vanadium (in 1929  $\frac{1}{3}$  the world's supply), molybdenum, antimony, copper, lead, tin, tungsten and zinc. Three-quarters of the people can neither read nor write. Venezuela is, in its turn, practically owned by 3 main oil companies, but has insisted on a very substantial contribution from them—to the benefit of her own ruling cabals. Labour seems well paid—skilled artisans receiving nearly £1 a day, but nowhere is the cost of living so fantastically high, and nowhere in South America is illiteracy so prevalent, reaching a proportion higher even than that of India. Actually not more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the State income comes from royalties and other oil payments—the rest is from tariffs which increase import prices by 70%. The duty on cotton fabrics is from 90% to 185% of their original cost, while duties on food in 1937 averaged 113%.<sup>1</sup>

Turning for a moment to the other side of the world, we may consider Siam—the Thailand of our day. Here, too, is a nominally independent country, but her economic life was long dominated by the Chinese, and her development fostered by British capital. The growing nationalist sentiment of Eastern Asia resented these marks of servitude, and led to the checking of foreign business by legislative Acts and by a policy of alignment with Japan; thus Siam was the only country in the League of Nations Assembly of February 1933 to refuse to condemn Japanese aggression in Manchuria. Her ambitions in Malaya had been checked by British occupation and intimidation; at the same time nearly the whole of the trade of her most valuable areas was in British control. But a great tug-of-war was going on behind the scenes; though in 1939 Britain controlled 37% of Siam's trade against Japan's 11.6%, the balance was gradually shifting, not only in the economic, but also the political world. Between 1931 and 1933 Japan increased her share of imports into Siam from 8.4 to 19.4%, she worked incessantly to turn her from China, and to encourage her to suppress "Communism"; Japanese business men visited Bangkok and paved the way for an official Economic Mission, to promote cotton-growing and the financing of certain crops on a large scale for export to Japan. With this went the suppression of Chinese schools and papers, and the flattering attentions which Siamese officials received from Nazi Germany, where they were welcomed and decorated. When Japan began her invasion

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. XXI, No. 2, January 1943, F. Haussmann, pp. 360-1.

of Malaya, she had ready the perfect base of operations, made still stronger by the acquiescence of the Vichy-controlled Indo-Chinese Government in all the aggressive steps taken both before and after December 7th, 1941.<sup>1</sup>

To return to Africa. When Western Capitalism burst upon the southern part of the African continent, using the Cape as its bridge-head for one stream of invasion, it found negro society, and consequently economic organization, primitive though it was, sharply differentiated from itself in at least three important particulars. First of all, the world in which the native lived was one in which he was intimately connected by personal ties with everyone who played some part in his economic life. Even if he himself did not actually grow or tend the corn or cattle which he used, he probably knew, personally, those who did; indeed, they were members of his own family group, and he was not brought into relationship with others by trade or marketing—he certainly could not envisage a sea, much less think of it as a highway of commerce—and the forms of mining on which he very rarely ventured were extremely primitive. On the whole, he was not intensely interested in fighting, though he had to turn to it not infrequently, if only in self-defence. His family was held responsible for wrong done, and generosity was the supreme virtue. Individual wealth, when gained, was comparatively little thought of, and certainly gradations of wealth were not part and parcel of his social or class system. It was thus a world in which his personal relationships were all-important.

Then it was a world of very small-scale units. Not only were the holdings of land small, but the tribes to which the families belonged were also small and their number legion, though most of them had a similar background of religious beliefs and of primitive culture. It was a small centrifugal world, almost incapable of a high degree of articulation or organization. Where outstanding personalities arose—comparatively rare phenomena in a society which laid such stress on the communal virtues—it was occasionally possible to weld the tribes by conquest into something like a state, but the binding cement of such organizations was force resting on personal supremacy, and since it ran counter to the general ethos of the race, was usually transient. The best example was the military hegemony of the Zulus—and their influence on Bantu civilization was disastrous, especially since so many European impressions were gained from the contacts, naturally hostile, which they made with this race.

How different all this is from the world, whose agents the Bantu were to meet. The highly organized State, closely integrated, and

<sup>1</sup> *A.B.C. of the Pacific*, Woodman, pp. 44–8, etc.

operating on a scale which was fantastically large when compared with the tribe; conducting its economics on a system where the individual was but a minute portion of the whole organization, and where he depended for his means of livelihood and his standard of living on men whom he had never seen and who controlled his existence at long range, through the interposition of many agencies whose activities were mysterious and often unguessed—this was something widely different from previous experience, and characterized by features to which the African was almost completely a stranger.

First of all this "brave new world" set a high value on individual wealth, to be attained for its own sake, without a social criterion. The rich man—not the generous, not the wise man—was king, and his symbol was cash and credit; he, almost alone, could command service, irrespective of his personal character or the welfare of his fellows. Thus he set a great store on the individual ownership of land, and gave it a value in terms quite different from that in which it had previously been regarded. Under him, the Bantu discovered a hierarchy of retainers, not bound by tribal or family loyalties, but by a new species of relationship, governed by the passing of metallic tokens from one man to another. One African saying pithily sums this up in these words, "The white man has no Kith or Kin, His only Kin is money".<sup>1</sup> Then he found that land was made to produce crops not to feed the owner and his family, but to be exchanged in return for these new, shining emblems; and he found, too, that if he worked on the aliens' land instead of his own he would be similarly rewarded. But what the white man gave with one hand he took away with the other, by forcing the African to pay some of his coins in return for benefits which at first he hardly recognized as such. This was an altogether strange idea, though, had he lived in other parts of the continent and been subject to the organizing abilities of the Moslems in the hinterland of the West Coast, he would have been more familiar both with the idea of State organization and direct taxation. As it was, this form of exaction he soon found to be a method of forcing him to cultivate lands not his own, and inducing him to regard money as all-important, as well as of inculcating the virtues of hard work; for it was not long before he realized that he was considered a lazy, feckless, idle fellow, who had to be driven to a day's, or a month's work, whether he liked it or not. How clearly Carlyle expressed this point of view in his *Nigger Question* (1865). "It is the law of our nature that the black man 'who will not work according to what ability the gods have given him' shall not have 'the smallest right to eat pumpkin or to any

<sup>1</sup> *Five Points for Africa, Wrong*, p. 33.

fraction of land that will grow pumpkin, however plentiful such land may be', but he has 'an indisputable and perpetual right to be compelled by the real proprietors of said land to do competent work for his living'." Thus the whole conception was, to him, artificial, and he reacted in the most natural way by displaying a lethargy in some one else's service which he probably did not show in his own.

There were no cities in the earlier Bantu world, but now the queer activity of the white man in digging up metal or stones on which he set great value led to the congregation in certain localities of large numbers, all engaged in the same occupation—large numbers, but still not large enough to do without the aid of the black man, who was encouraged to come to these ant-heaps and, by performing menial and dangerous tasks, to earn some of the metal which the earth surrendered. Here he learnt new and exciting things, he developed new tastes, new needs, and though he often suffered in character and body, his poverty kept him there for long stretches, unnaturally divorced from his home and his tribe. He abandoned the land for the mine, the rhythmic round of the natural year for the hectic intensity of wage labour, paid so much a shift—he became a stranger to his old life, yet an intruder in the white man's world, not only promoting a disharmony in his own character, but also, if he only knew it, a disharmony in the balance between urban and rural life.

There was indeed a maladjustment, a disequilibrium, not only within himself, but also in the whole society of which he came to be a part. There was a maladjustment of race, to be expected when a small, dominant group of one colour, highly skilled in technical processes, held in subjection a numerically preponderant serfdom, refusing them the means to increase their skill. There was a maladjustment on the land, when the dwellers on it could not attain the right symbiotic relationship, and so gave rise to those potentially, and actually, disastrous conditions which have produced the Dust Bowl of America—the native was the victim of both erosion of soil and erosion of character. He was herded into inadequate Reserves, forced to over-graze and over-crop the land whose fertility he had not the means to restore, and even driven into a dilemma by an increase of price in the agricultural commodities he produced; for this very rise encouraged him to try to get still more out of the weary earth. While the whole industrial life of the country underwent a violent revolution, no such movement affected agriculture, which remained comparatively primitive and unregulated. Even if, by some means, he did improve the quality of the land he worked, he was haunted by the suspicion that its enhanced value would make it more desirable

in the eyes of the European, and though he might not have heard of the parable of the "one ewe lamb", he knew what confiscation meant! We have already touched upon the question of land erosion when talking about Kenya, where, as the Deputy Director of the Imperial Bureau of Social Science said, human society in its relation to land is indivisible into black and white. The whites have to exploit the land in order to maintain their superiority over the black, the blacks have to exploit it in order to exist at all in competition with the whites.<sup>1</sup>

For the moment let us confine our attention to the exploitation of the land—or "working", if the other word seems too brutal—which is carried out by agriculturalists. There is, first of all, the deeply-planted idea that native enterprise is far inferior in the raising of crops to that of white settlers. Professor Buell believes that the evidence for this is lacking and that a native small-farm system, subject to European assistance, is possibly more productive economically. The experience of Kenya would go towards proving this point, for much of the difficulty about land productiveness in Africa is caused by the background and tradition of European farming and method which a white settler inevitably brings with him. If, for example, the *rationale* of farming in Devonshire is so vastly different from that in Norfolk, as Henry Williamson proved, then it requires the insight of genius and vast experience to appreciate what conditions will be in East Africa. It was one of the tragedies of the land after 1919 that vast areas of Kenya were distributed in massive blocks of from 2,000 to 5,000 acres to men whose suitability was quite unproved, and who had neither the capital nor the labour to turn these into reasonable farmland. This was quite distinct from the hundreds of thousands of acres which were distributed to the East African Syndicate or to individuals like Lord Delamere. Under the present system the white settler, by assistance also from his Government, secures a larger share in distribution of profits, to which accrue also those that come his way from land speculation, but probably the net production is no greater than it would be under a native State.<sup>2</sup>

This competition in land-hunger between white and black has given the land a value in a way that it never had before—land, of course, was always highly prized, the Bantu, with his system of crop and cattle-raising, could never have too much of it, the Masai would have roamed the world over, if conditions had been possible; but all of them thought of it in terms only of crops and cattle for communal ownership and service, and never as something to be bought and sold for money—even had they grasped

<sup>1</sup> G. V. Jacks.

<sup>2</sup> "The Destiny of East Africa", R. Buell, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. VI, April 1928.

the meaning of money. It was this ignorance of the market value of land that early adventurers were able to exploit with such profit; when once the idea of land value in terms of cash becomes thoroughly familiar, all the old conceptions about land tenure go by the board, and with them the foundation of much tribal culture. The mental vision of some Bantu is often blind both to his ultimate profit and the land's real function, and he is reluctant to turn to pasturage—that is, keeping idle, so he imagines, a potentially valuable piece of merchandise—land which he regards as an asset to be realized almost at sight. These conditions occur much less frequently nowadays, if only because the native has so much less of it that he dare not sell, even were he allowed, for fear of starvation, while the system of Reserves and Crown Lands has quite altered the features of the market.

There were many occasions on which the native recklessly parted with his land, but it is doubtful if his disposal of it was as disastrous as the use to which the white man put it, especially in parts of West Africa. Once plentiful supplies of wild rubber could be got from the Gold Coast, Nigeria and, most of all, the Congo Basin, but so merciless was the drain on the trees and so improvident the policy of replacement that it was not long before these natural resources were absolutely exhausted, and not another pound of rubber produced. The grim story of the Amazon Basin was repeated in the Congo; vast fortunes were made at one time in both areas by methods equally cruel and equally ruinous; the Putomayo Indians are said to have declined in numbers from 50,000 to 10,000, the Congo natives from 20,000,000 to 8,500,000. Eventually wild-rubber tapping could not stand the competition of plantation rubber as organized in Malaya and the Netherlands Indies—more than  $\frac{9}{10}$  is now derived from plantations. But it is little use making criticisms on military grounds at this hour of the day against the policy of concentrating rubber production in one vulnerable area of the world<sup>1</sup> when our own short-sightedness and acquiescence in certain economic policies have made this inevitable—the only remedy either for the waste or unhealthy concentration is a world-wide planning scheme, devised and carried out with some other motive than self-enrichment in the shortest possible time.

Plantation rubber—plantation coffee—plantation cotton—this type of agricultural organization provokes different reactions, some authorities, as we have seen, regarding it as an essential feature of modern large-scale production and urging its adoption over a much wider field, especially for advanced agriculture. There is nothing radically alien to Bantu ideals in the Russian system of

<sup>1</sup> House of Commons Debate, June 24th, 1942.

collectivization, if it could be organized before the old tribal system, with its emphasis on communal ownership and communal responsibility, had completely disappeared ; but under the present arrangements any great extension of plantation organization could only mean increased African toil for the benefit of the white settler. In some parts the main object of the dominant community is to discourage production by the native in any organization, either plantation—for he dislikes the rôle of supervisor which he would fill instead of actual owner, for, generally speaking, plantation organization requires capital resources and equipment on a scale greater than any individual could supply—or peasant farming, since any absorption of native energy in the working of his own plot means an even more acute labour shortage for the service of the white settler. The imposition of direct taxation on mere existence was one of the ways devised to drive the Bantu into wage labour. Perhaps nothing so naïve has ever come from an official source as the *obiter dictum* of the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in a White Paper (November 1941) on Native Policy: “The African is fortunate in a country such as this because if peasant farming does not appeal to him he can always find work and wages in the European Area”!! Or later, “The African is free in his area . . . the able-bodied has to pay a poll-tax of £1 a year in exchange for which he has a free building-site, arable and pasture-land rent free. The European does not pay a poll-tax and does not have this privilege”!! (Exclamation marks ours.)

African agriculture has sadly lacked co-ordination or planning at every point. If in the hands of natives, it has been marked by an unhealthy dependence on a single crop, as on cocoa, which forms practically the whole of Gold Coast exports, or on cotton, in the growing of which Uganda is the second most productive area in the Empire, ranking after India. Even if controlled by white settlers, many of its products have to compete with similar things grown in more temperate zones and in countries which are not harassed by the formidable transport difficulties confronting Kenya and Tanganyika in their effort to get to overseas markets the maize, stock, wheat, coffee, bean, sisal (as well as some cotton and sugar), which from time to time they have attempted to grow. In addition, these latter are completely dependent on African man-power. This was never as prolific as is supposed, but the real crux of the difficulty is not perhaps its total, but in its distribution, as with so many other things, and the instability of its supply. Many of the crops mentioned require some considerable time for development, and since they are grown with an eye directed solely on the export market, they must find purchasers



at a reasonable figure, or else the whole economy of the country completely wilts. The lack of secondary or tertiary industries makes it impossible for man-power unemployed through the failure in the primary products to be absorbed in even the slightest degree; there is no adequate home market (owing to the poverty of native inhabitants) for the consumption of goods left on their hands. From every point of view colonial areas are especially vulnerable to those violent depressions which were so marked a—indeed almost the only—feature of the years 1926–1936. We have already referred to some of these. Let us summarize the situation in the following table:<sup>1</sup>

Between 1926 and 1932 the fall in commodity prices in rubber was from 79 to 3; silk, 7 to 1; tin, 70 to 19; copper, 21 to 5; cotton, 22 to 5; sugar, 3.5 to .6. We may also instance the changes in the price of U.S. wheat, which fell from \$2.60 in 1920 to 44 cents in 1933.

In 1926 the Gold Coast received £11,350,000 for 238,000 tons of cocoa; in 1937, 230,000 tons earned only £2,900,000.<sup>2</sup> Palm-oil and ground-nuts (from the Gambia) showed similar fluctuations. Thus both mineral and agricultural products were affected.

If Africa was isolated in earlier times, she has certainly made up for it latterly by the embarrassingly tight embrace in which she is held by the business world of Europe and America. It is a communal slavery as terrifying in its results as was the personal slavery of the 18th and early 19th centuries; for the whole economic life is subservient either to the designs of monopolists or to the violently shifting periods of boom and slump which they are powerless to control. There is not even the consolation of having some little bargaining power, and certainly no say in the formation of an independent trade policy; for no colony is allowed to enter into any trading agreement with a Power outside the British Empire. Nor can many an African understand why a Government which to him appears omnipotent, and generally (though fortunately not everywhere) insists on the payment of taxation due to it whether the years be fat or lean, is unable to cope with such inexplicable happenings as the sudden collapse of the prices in the palm-oil market. There rises the very natural resentment against the official and the trader alike, both of whom are only the puppets of forces vastly stronger than themselves. There is a further complication which Dr. A. Lewis has pointed out—one arising in that type of society to which Dutch experts have given the name of “plural”, such as we find in Kenya and Malaya, though not by any means confined to them. It is, that in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Foreign Affairs*, April 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *Cd.* 6277, p. 107.

communities where the dividing line of wealth coincides with that of colour, every problem, be it of economics or education or even of social habits, becomes a racial problem. To quote his words, "If, for instance, you want to tax the rich in order to educate the poor, this social problem is at once seen in racial terms as taxing the whites to benefit the blacks. If governments favoured the rich at the expense of the poor, they were necessarily favouring whites at the expense of the blacks." Thus everything gets bedevilled!

There have been occasions when the efforts of monopolists have come to grief in the face of the opposition which the African has been able to organize, but they are few and far between, and are practically confined to the West Coast. There was one attempt in 1913-15 made by Lever Brothers to corner the palm-oil market, but it was defeated by the refusal of the natives of Sierra Leone to sell to them.<sup>1</sup> Similarly in the Gold Coast the efforts made by exporting firms to fix the selling price for cocoa, and to enforce buying agreements which both producers and middlemen thought unfair, resulted in a long and desperate struggle, with a boycott which paralysed the market for some time.<sup>2</sup> While the war lasts, the cocoa crop is bought as a whole by the Government agency,<sup>3</sup> which pays £16 10s. a ton for it—about 1s. 6d. per pound—while in the shops the retail price is 1s. 7d. In 1926, the average price per ton or the estimated cash received by the agricultural community was approximately £47 14s. Such, however, are the hazards of war-time trading that in 1940 the Ministry of Food lost £263,000; next year had a profit of £1,300,000—but in the third season lost it all again.<sup>4</sup>

While the war has opened our eyes to many deficiencies and faults in our dealings with the Colonial Empire, and so given some encouragement to those who would try to set right the more obvious shortcomings, it has intensified certain economic trends which careful examiners of the situation had previously deplored. One of these is the recurrent emphasis on production—for war purposes. "We need to increase Colonial production for war purposes on an immense scale. We have to develop mineral production. We have to push up the production of meat, hides, palm-oil, ground-nuts and all the rest."<sup>5</sup> While in itself increased production may be an advantage, yet it calls for all the greater

<sup>1</sup> *Economic History of Tropical African Colonies*, Pim, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Pim, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> The Under-Secretary for the Colonies claimed this and other arrangements as "complete Socialist control" (House of Commons, August 4th, 1942)—a quite inaccurate use of the adjective, Socialist. The Government buying price actually has varied, sometimes falling as low as £12 (Nigeria, 1944).

<sup>4</sup> *Economist*, November 20th, 1943.

<sup>5</sup> Under Secretary for Colonies, House of Commons, June 24th, 1942.

planning to secure that, even if only after the war, the greater flow of products is available, first of all, for the inhabitants of the countries that grow them, or that the production and buying policy be so continued that an assured and steady market is available for the increased supply. At the moment, colonial peoples want goods in payment—we have neither the goods nor the transport to convey them, and the same stringency is likely to last for some considerable time after the war is over. It would be only enlightened self-interest on our part if we still retained a strict control of production for the home market, a stable price policy for colonial goods, not only those produced in greater quantity owing to war exigencies, but also for the vast amounts in storage of cocoa (for example), so that there should be no catastrophic collapse of colonial trade, with the possibilities of a contemporaneous boom at home, for up to now our own comparatively high standard has been procured at the expense of colonial peoples whose goods we have so cheaply bought.

The impossibility of maintaining a steady supply of goods into colonial areas hits their revenue very hard, for most of them depend to a very considerable extent on import duties, especially those on the West Coast, which have never developed a comprehensive system of direct taxation, except in one or two areas in Nigeria subject to Mohammedan influence. Thus in 1937, customs duties formed 81% of the revenue of the Gold Coast, 72% of Gambia, 56% of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, compared with an average 54% in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup> Where direct taxation is applied, it is nearly always on the native alone, and only recently has the attempt been made to impose income-tax on the white settlers—an attempt not unnaturally resisted by them. Direct taxation of natives yields only small sums, compared with the total; but no factor has been more potent in changing their way of life. It is not an elastic source of income; the method of assessment is too crude to do justice to the increasing differentiation which is taking place in native society, and its collection absorbs too much of the time of officials appointed for other purposes than to be tax-collectors. Compared with West Africa, the proportion of revenue raised from native taxation in the East is 22.9% to 8.8%, while the burden of indirect taxation represented by import duties is approximately 13.7% in East Africa and 16% in West. It is an interesting commentary on the ill-balanced economy of these colonies, that though they produce for Europe foodstuffs—or the raw materials for manufactured foods—they have to import a substantial proportion of their required foods—and pay import duty on them. The Gold Coast's

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Survey of Colonial Empire*, 1937, H.M.S.O.

imported food comes to between  $\frac{1}{8}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of her total import trade.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the West Indies both Jamaica and Trinidad import large quantities of foodstuffs and goods which they themselves could produce—Jamaica, in a fish-producing sea, imports £250,000 worth of tinned fish from America, though her own island dependencies, Turks and Caicos, depend for their existence on the export of salt to Canada to cure the fish that comes to them again in tins!<sup>2</sup> Trinidad imported \$900,000 of rice (mainly polished) and \$550,000 of tinned milk.

Not only is revenue based so largely on import duties, but it is subject to violent fluctuations which make a steady financial policy very difficult. There is a close relation between the volume of a country's exports and imports—at least undeveloped, non-industrialized areas like those we are dealing with in Africa. We have seen the terrible fall in the price of many primary products, which curtailed the purchasing power of their inhabitants, reduced their imports, decreased their revenue, cut down such social services as they had and impoverished them still further. Another—and laudable—variation in revenue was caused in the West African Colonies by the agreed restrictions on the import of spirits. However advantageous this might—and indeed is sure to be, in the long run, the problem created immediately for both the Gold Coast and Nigeria was difficult, for in the former between 1927 and 1934 the restrictions cut down the duties from the liquor trade from £1,510,000 to £193,000; while in the latter the proportion of customs receipts from this source fell from 60% in 1913 to 5% in 1920.<sup>3</sup> In 1927 Nigerian revenue had been £6,305,000, in 1931 £4,858,000, in 1936 £6,260,000—in each case nearly half these sums being raised by customs duties.<sup>4</sup> Gold Coast experienced like vicissitudes, its revenue falling from £4,112,000 in the first of these years, to £2,284,000 four years later. The swing is not confined to the depression years. Gambia in 1937 had a revenue of £286,104 (considerably less than its expenditure); in 1940 it was estimated to be only £131,000. Sierra Leone in 1939 budgeted for an income of £1,095,296; in the following year for only £783,342.<sup>5</sup> Whatever revenue is, it is inadequate for its purpose, both immediately before and during the war; for if we take the returns of the four West African British Colonies—Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia—

<sup>1</sup> *Plan for Africa*, Hinden, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Cd. 6070, pp. 87–118. In July 1942 a grant was made to Barbados and Jamaica from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act for a fishery survey of waters surrounding the West Indian Colonies.

<sup>3</sup> *Economic History*, Pim, pp. 183, 185.

<sup>4</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1442.

<sup>5</sup> Cd. 6277, pp. 135, 148.

for the four years 1937-40, sixteen instances in all, we find that in only four out of that total was there a surplus; and of those, three were in the Gold Coast,<sup>1</sup> which has an estimated annual income per head of £13—a considerable increase, for example, over that of India.<sup>2</sup>

Another way in which to measure both the low producing power of the population and the vast profits which must accrue to the owners of capital invested in these colonies, is to consider the great disparity between the value of the goods they export and those they import, bearing in mind that in the latter total are included producers' goods for the mines and other machine-requiring works. In the returns for 1940 (*Statesman's Year Book*, 1942) the four colonies exported between them a total valued at £30,999,471, of which nearly half came from Nigeria, and a small fraction, £319,227, from Gambia; their imports were worth £18,274,855. There is therefore a very large sum of nearly £13,000,000 which goes to somebody other than the inhabitants of these colonies—in profits, interests, pensions, debt service and other non-effective expenditure. The latter two heads absorb from these same areas not less than 26.6% of the revenue,<sup>3</sup> the highest figure in the six main divisions of the British Colonial Empire. The debt charges of Nigeria are almost the highest in Africa, while the cost of administration is only 0.4% below the highest.<sup>4</sup> Between these two—i.e., debt and non-effective expenditure—and the cost of administration, not less than 64% of revenue is spent, leaving for economic development and social services a sum of 1s. 3d. per head of the population; add another 6d. from the expenditure of native treasuries for these purposes, and the figure is still the lowest of all the thirteen colonies in Africa. In Zanzibar, Bechuanaland, Swaziland (the latter two infinitely less rich either in man-power or productive capacity) sums of between 11s. and 12s. are spent, certainly little enough compared with the provision in Britain; but a biting commentary on the poverty and stagnation of Nigeria.<sup>5</sup>

Nigeria has long been "in the slough", for its industries or agricultural products have not attracted the foreign capital necessary for further development. The figure of invested capital per head of the population is about the lowest in the British possessions; and since the capital that is invested is all "foreign",

<sup>1</sup> Appendices to Cd. 6277.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1400.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, August 9th, 1941.

<sup>4</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1433 (Table XIII).

<sup>5</sup> Proportion of revenue (£6,316,000) to population (20,583,000) is smaller in Nigeria (£31 per head) than in any other colonial area. It is lower even than British Somaliland (Cd. 6298, tables, p. 12).

profits arising from it are spent outside the colony. Practically everyone not actually a native of Nigeria has to support an establishment in England, which absorbs a great proportion of his pay, while the expensive staff and premises maintained by the firms who control the distributive trade are a still further handicap. Sir Donald Cameron contrasts this with the situation in Tanganyika, which is happier, in so far as much of the capital is local and invested in staple crops, like coffee and sisal, any profit from which therefore remains at home; nor do the activities of middlemen either unduly enhance the price to purchasers or batten on the sellers.<sup>1</sup> In Kenya and the Rhodesias we have the spectacle of the native driven into inadequate Reserves, and so unable to produce adequate crops for lack of space; but in Nigeria the great difficulties are in transport and in the application of science to the improvement of such crops as the natives can grow, for, as we have already mentioned, little land has been alienated from its owners; European activity has not been able to show itself in agriculture, but in the marketing and distribution of products. They thus have a very complete control of native fortunes by their grip on the machinery of exchange and sale.<sup>2</sup> The policy of speedy enrichment which proved so disastrous to the world rubber industry may prove equally so to the palm-oil trade, whose competitors—the Netherlands Indies and Malaya<sup>3</sup>—were making great strides, because of the superior quality of their products under plantation conditions. Moreover, Nigerian trade is practically a monopoly of the United Africa Company. In short, the history of Nigeria shows that it is almost as detrimental to the best interests of a native population to leave them their land as to alienate it—*unless* the colonial Power is prepared to facilitate a ready and reliable flow of capital at nominal—or even no—interest, to employ all the resources of education in bringing the latest scientific advice and achievement in so attractive a way that the native will use it, and unless the marketing and distribution of such goods as are not needed for home consumption are in the hands of an agency which will neither defraud the seller nor create monopoly scarcities to enhance the price for the buyer.

Closely linked with the problems of marketing and distribution are those of transport. The most widespread mechanical form of the latter up to 1930 was undoubtedly the railway, which played an enormous part in the acquisition and development of colonial

<sup>1</sup> *My Tanganyika Service and some Nigeria*, Cameron, pp. 216 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Pim, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1925 and 1929 Nigeria produced 53·3%, in 1937, 35·2%; between 1925–9 the Netherlands East Indies produced 4·8%, in 1937, 25·8%.

and quasi-colonial areas like Africa and South America. Lenin regarded railways as the summation of the most important branches of capitalist industry, coal and iron, and showed how they were linked up with large-scale production and the whole apparatus of monopolistic finance capitalism.<sup>1</sup> He showed, too, how between 1890 and 1913 the total length of the lines in colonial areas owned by European Powers rose from 82,000 to 210,000 kilometres, while the British Empire's "mileage" (including lines in this country) rose by 101,000 kilometres. Lord Lugard placed a greater emphasis on the necessity for railways in Africa than on research, and assumed that such construction was bound to be remunerative, since the interest on the loans would be a first charge on colonial revenue, and would cost the British taxpayer nothing.<sup>2</sup> For their building vast sums were needed, often greatly in excess of the estimates. Thus the Uganda Railway from the Coast to Lake Victoria, begun in 1895 and completed in 1901, cost £5,500,000, instead of £2,500,000. Even Sir Charles Eliot confessed that he did not know why it had been built.<sup>3</sup> Construction costs varied greatly in different parts of the Continent; the Baro-Kano line in Nigeria was cheap at £3500 per mile; in Kenya-Uganda it worked out at £9500, Gold Coast £10,314, French Congo £10,400.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the Union of South Africa and the colonial territories of European Powers it has been estimated that the cost of the major lines of communication has been £384,000,000.<sup>5</sup>

The internal trade of Africa had developed at different rates and to varying degrees of intensity throughout the western and southern parts of the Continent. Among the Bantu races there was comparatively little inter-tribal commerce and a limited number of markets. On the West Coast and its hinterland, internal trade has long been highly developed, bush markets are frequent, while the large Mohammedan cities to the north-east of Nigeria are great focal points for an extensive commerce, with its army of middlemen. What internal African commerce really needed was a system of roads to link up the petty centres of trade and industry and to facilitate the exchange of agricultural products grown on a small scale. But it was not the well-being of African agriculturists that was the primary purpose of those who were responsible for pushing on with the construction of railways.

<sup>1</sup> *Imperialism*, p. 10, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 501.

<sup>3</sup> *British Policy in Kenya Colony*, Dill, p. 16. Nominally the purpose was the suppression of slavery!

<sup>4</sup> *Economic History of Tropical African Colonies*, Pim, p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1661.

They had as their objects the tapping of the various mineral deposits which prospecting had discovered, and the placing on the world markets of agricultural produce grown at cheap rates owing to the command of cheap native labour. Fundamentally, therefore, the railways acted as great drains, carrying away the mineral and vegetable resources of the interior and giving practically nothing in return; they were constructed, on the whole, in the interest of their termini, and not on those of the lands through which they passed. The emphasis laid on the growth of crops, not for home consumption, but for export abroad, was partly due to the need to find goods for the railways to carry, in order to make them pay.

Not that railways were generally a paying proposition. In many cases they have proved a terrific burden on colonial finances, for by far the greater proportion of the capital raised for their construction was guaranteed at fixed rates of interest by the colonies through and to which they ran, and sometimes issued at less than par.<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that only a little over  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the capital raised for rail and waterway systems in the British colonial areas was subscribed for non-State enterprises,<sup>2</sup> leaving about £230,000,000 whose interest has to be found by the State governments. Both the mineral and agricultural products were, as we have seen, subject to the most violent fluctuations of price, the former less perhaps than the latter, and providing a fairly continuous stream, while agricultural products vary according to the season. Thus those railways which serve principally the mineral-bearing regions are alone likely to be profitable. When railway construction was being carried on during the 1830's and 1840's in Britain, it was regarded solely from the business point of view; in Africa it was sometimes State purposes, and not infrequently the profound influence of the coal and iron-masters of Britain which between them dictated the lay-out of the railways, and burdened the colonies with expensive lines; railway accounts became inextricably muddled with other items in the colonial budgets; even in India it was only in 1921 that the Acworth Committee recommended the separation of the Railway from the General Budget—a step which it took 5 years or more even to initiate. The fixed rates were soon found to be too high; the home Government in some cases (*e.g.*, in Nyasaland, Kenya and Uganda) charged no interest on its loans, thus giving a false appearance of prosperity.

In his treatment of the economic history of various African

<sup>1</sup> 1923 Nigerian Loan of £5,700,000 issued at 88%. £773,384 is required annually to meet the interest payment on railways alone.

<sup>2</sup> *African Survey*, p. 1604.



tropical colonies, Sir Alan Pim stresses the great burden which the railway systems represent. When the Kenya-Uganda railway was practically completed in 1899, the value of goods carried for export was £70,000!<sup>1</sup> Half the public debt of Sierra Leone is borne by the railways;<sup>2</sup> in the Gold Coast the fraction is  $\frac{4}{5}$ ; in Southern Nigeria, 1913 was practically the only year when the net receipts from railway traffic exceeded the interest on capital, in 1940 and in 1941 the loss was estimated at £500,000 annually; up to 1914 the Kenya railways showed heavy deficits, and eventually had to have £5,000,000 of the construction debt remitted; Tanganyika used to carry large quantities of copper and other products from the Congo—these now go by the Belgian railways, thus depriving Tanganyika of its one comparatively stable traffic; Nyasaland, having no minerals to offer, has put its finances into a sort of strait jacket, limiting its usable revenue to a fixed sum and diverting half of any surplus to help meet railway and other debt services; in Northern Rhodesia between 1911 and 1936 revenue balanced expenditure only on six occasions, and though the copper belt proved a valuable customer to the railway, the violent oscillation in the price of metal severely affected the traffic returns. In an analysis of the public finances of six colonial governments carried out for the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, it was shown that of all loan expenditure on which interest charges were being paid in 1938, 27% had been devoted to economic services (excluding railways) . . . but if railways, harbour, water-works are included in economic services, then the figure reaches 75%.<sup>3</sup> Social services came to 5%. We can see therefore how handicapped African and other colonial social services must be, when the first call on revenue is to attempt to make up the deficits on a means of transport which from the beginning benefited heavy industry in Britain, and is still used to benefit the mineral interests and white agriculture.

The establishment of complete British control of Malaya was marked by a similar spurt in the building of railways, 1300 miles of which are now operated by the State. Up to 1924, £22,840,000 had been expended, most of it out of current revenue, but practically all of it spent in the purchase of iron and steel goods manufactured in England; more than once operations to provide rail transport and harbour facilities have been undertaken and nearly brought to completion before discoveries were made which completely upset engineering calculations and forced the abandonment of the projects. This occurred at Prai and at Port

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin of International News*, Vol. XX, No. 4, February 1943, p. 140.

Swettenham. On these loans, amounting to nearly £12,000,000, the Federated Government had to pay fixed interest at 7%, 6% and 4½%; they were for railway and harbour construction. In spite of all, the average yield on railways has been about 1·5%—more, certainly, than Africa can often show—but to quote the words of the 1924 Government Report, “having regard to the wealth of the country, the failure of the railway from the point of view of an investor affords a matter for grave and serious thought”.<sup>1</sup>

There is a close relation between railway transport and the most profitable areas of agricultural production; a report of 1925 drawn up on this problem showed that in Southern Rhodesia exportable grain crops could not bear more than 15 miles ox-wagon transport, in addition to railway freights; cotton, tobacco, dairy products might be as far as 25 miles from a railway. These figures are higher than those for Canada or Australia, where the limit is from 10 to 12 miles. Beyond it, a lower standard of living for those dependent on export crops is inevitable.<sup>2</sup> In Southern Rhodesia not less than 50% of the land lying within an area of 25 miles from the railway has been reserved for white occupation. In Northern Rhodesia, between Livingstone and Broken Hill, farms owned by white settlers hug the railway closely for most of its length. The blanket thus put between native Reserves and farms is not even pierced with adequate feeder roads, with the result, for example, that maize grown by Africans is uneconomic “in the sense that it is grown in areas which the Government has not seen fit to equip with the facilities of road and railway transport”.<sup>3</sup> The absence of roads means that even the internal market is stifled.

If we take the following group of colonies, protectorates, mandates and the quasi-Dominion of Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Nyasaland, Uganda, Tanganyika, Basutoland, we find that the only “foodstuffs” they produce, in spite of official encouragement, to any exportable extent are maize, meat, coffee, tea, cane-sugar, tobacco; and that the percentage of their production compared with world production is only 0·3%, 0·1%, 2%, 2·5%, 0·1%, 0·8%.<sup>4</sup> They have therefore a comparatively small place in the volume of world trade, and must compete with countries climatically superior, for instance, in the growing of maize, with a better reputation for the rearing of cattle for meat, with much older traditions in the growing of tea and cane-sugar, and, generally speaking, better served with transport facilities than any

<sup>1</sup> *British Imperialism in Malaya*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>2</sup> *The World's Open Spaces*, Kimble, pp. 147–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, Hancock, Vol. II, Pt. 2, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Raw Materials*, Royal Institute of International Affairs (Appendices).

African country can be. It is only cheap land, cheap labour, that could enable them to be put on the world market at all, and even these have to be supplemented by preferential traffic rates, much below the actual working costs. These preferences, especially in the case of maize, do not generally apply to produce of native origin. In Kenya African-grown maize in July 1942 received 4s 90c. for 200 lbs. at the marketing centres; then an allowance of 50 c. per bag (*i.e.*, 200 lbs.) was made to traders handling the maize to the railway, while another 75 cents per 200 lbs. was set aside from the profits of the Maize Control Board and paid into a special fund "for the benefit of African producers". The price of maize grown by non-natives was 9s. per 200 lbs. In South Africa, similarly, such generous terms are given to growers of mealies for export that they leave Cape Town Docks at 4s. 9d. a bag to foreign buyers, while Transkei natives have to pay from 18s. to £1 per bag, or 30s. if they buy on credit.<sup>1</sup> Preferential export rates have to be made up by one means or another—*e.g.*, in Kenya high import duties are charged. Calico, cotton blankets, hoes—all indispensable articles for Africans—have to pay rates four, six, or even ten times those charged on exportable agricultural produce, while the free list, covering 40% of imported goods, omits many real necessities such as furniture, hardware, foodstuffs, but includes articles used only by Europeans such as lorries, machinery, etc.; it omits bicycles, but includes tractors! Candles for household lighting pay a higher rate than those used for mining gold.<sup>2</sup>

It would be interesting to speculate what the Romans would have done for Africa in the matter of roads had they ever had the chance to apply their engineering skill to this intractable continent. The idea of scientific road construction seems hardly to have entered into the calculations of Governments until the Transport Revolution, effected by the discovery of the internal-combustion engine, brought it to their notice. As in many other countries where railways grew haphazardly and were not kept up-to-date either in construction, rolling stock or management, or where they were shackled by over-capitalization, fierce competition soon became evident. The motor-bus, which has so changed the face of rural England, is in a fair way to doing the same for Africa. It is immensely popular in Nigeria, it links together town and country, emphasizing by contrast the poverty of the latter and so stimulating the urge to urban migration; the native travels to the mines by bus when he can raise the fare, and so saves himself possibly many weeks of weary foot-slogging. This

<sup>1</sup> *The Cape Coloured People Today* (S.A. Institute of Race Relations), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, Leys, pp. 85-6.

development naturally does not suit the railways, since colonial budgets are still further unbalanced by additional losses of passenger revenue. In the Gold Coast, therefore, we find that the price of petrol is increased, motor duties raised, and some roads, as also in Kenya, running parallel to railways and serving the ports, are barred to the carriage of goods by road or motor services.<sup>1</sup> Such stifling of an economic urge can only increase the depression already so deadening, for it checks the growth of a large internal trade which is one of the more obvious ways by which African poverty can be relieved. And even where roads exist, they have often been planned for strategic rather than commercial reasons, though there is no reason why the two purposes should not be combined. In 1942 plans were discussed and elaborated for roads from the west to the east, from Duala through the Belgian Congo and through Eastern Equatorial Africa from the border of Northern Rhodesia to Nairobi. Estimates as to the cost of the latter vary, one giving as little as £355,000, while the Tanganyika Development Committee, which would be responsible for 810 miles within its area, allowed £688,500, working out at £850 per mile.<sup>2</sup> In any case, this figure stands in striking contrast with the very high construction costs of railways within the same zone; there is everything to be said for the building of good roads, provided that they can stand up to all - or most - of the vagaries of the African climate.

For a long time to come it will be impossible for air transport to affect the lives of Africans to the same degree as has been done by road and rail. At present the object of air travel is to enable men to pass from Europe to Africa and back, usually on official business, in the shortest possible time. This can have no interest for the African; even if it had, the charges are beyond his wildest dreams. So it must remain a European luxury, whether for passengers or cargo transport - and its rates must remain very high. Nor have the African colonies much to spare from scanty and fluctuating revenues for the construction of landing grounds, well-equipped airports and the ancillary meteorological and other services. If designed, they can only be run on heavy subsidies from the Imperial Government, and so serve purposes which will often have little relevance to African welfare. It would hardly pay finance capitalism to indulge as largely in air expansion for civil purposes as it did in railway construction, if only for the reason that the volume of industry created by the development of the air is unlikely to be as great as that created by the building of steamships and railway engines and lines. Coal and iron mag-

<sup>1</sup> *Plan for Africa*, Hinden, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Crown Colonist*, December 1941.

nates have not the same interest in the building of aeroplane engines; the much smaller personnel required and their relatively higher skill do not offer the same opportunities for the exploitation of labour as did the railways. It is probable, too, that the greater potential strategical (*i.e.*, military) value of air organization (including, of course, the ground section) will cause governments to keep a more careful watch on everything that air lines do than they did on railways, though it is strange that the only part of Africa where the air services are directly State-owned is the Union. There is one more interesting point, not directly affecting Africa, but arising from the experiences of one former imperialist Power.

Germany's colonies in Africa were run on strikingly different lines: in the Cameroons and Togoland very great attention was given to the application of science to agricultural problems, and a high degree of efficiency, on stern and impartial lines, was achieved. Her record in East Africa will also bear critical investigation, but in South-West the brutal treatment of the Hereros will long be remembered. Railway construction was not very prominent in any of these, though it had been pushed forward in the Cameroons and was projected on an increased scale in East Africa, with the German Government subscribing a large portion of the capital. Not unnaturally, with the Nazi régime Germany had great hopes of regaining possession of the territories lost by the Treaty of Versailles, but she also turned her attention to another continent where her already considerable bodies of German citizens offered a *point d'appui* for wider schemes. As rail transport in the Argentine and other South American countries was practically a monopoly of British capitalists, so Germany made extensive efforts to secure, against American competition, a control over the airways. It was a new technique in quasi-colonial exploitation. The German airlines kept German citizens in close contact with their homeland, their extensive business interests, meticulously organized, were furthered by the rapid transmission of orders to Europe and a widely-spread propaganda machine was aided by the *Condor* and other lines. Together with secret wireless transmitting stations, these connections gave Germany a great influence on South American policies; the older method of direct aggression could not succeed in the face of American opposition or American penetration, camouflaged by the Monroc Doctrine, but the comparatively new "fifth-columnism", applied to so vast an area, was likely to be as successful in its ultimate objects as had been the trading activities of Lugard, Mackinnon and Rhodes.

## GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICS—AND THE FUTURE

THE LAST two chapters have dealt separately with politics and economics; it may now be possible to examine briefly the interactions of the two, and, by observing how their influence upon each other has affected the past, to suggest some lines of profitable development for the future.

The great era of colonial expansion was the direct outcome of the unleashing of productive forces brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the technological inventions which engendered it. It synchronized also, as it was bound to do, with the heyday of *laissez-faire*, the day of free competition, and of the hopes which were built upon the beneficent results of unrestricted trading. Cheap labour at home, still more, cheaper abroad, produced not merely great wealth for a few, but, in spite of the many disparities, had, by the end of the 19th century, brought about a rise in the standard of living for the artizan and working classes, the reason for which they were at first unable to see, or perhaps did not care to recognize. As long ago as 1840, an Oxford professor, Merivale, in one of a series of lectures on "Colonization and Colonies", diagnosed the reason for the prosperity which he saw in some English cities. "What raised Liverpool and Manchester from provincial towns to gigantic cities? What maintains now their ever active industry and their rapid accumulation of wealth? . . . Their present opulence is as really owing to the toil and suffering of the negro as if his hands had excavated their docks and fabricated their steam engines."<sup>1</sup>

The abolition of the slave-trade had been brought about as the result of many years' work by men who were certainly not hypocritical in their wish to see the traffic in human beings replaced by commerce in manufactured goods. It is too easy a gibe at their characters to point out how their philanthropy eventually met with a substantial pecuniary reward. The journeys of Livingstone opened up a new vista in which it was not only material gain that was at stake. As in all human actions, the 19th century managed, no doubt, to confuse certain ethical values with considerations of quite another type. The Puritan of the 17th century had invested worldly prudence, thrift and attention to business with a religious sanction. A not dissimilar attitude quite genuinely characterized Englishmen 200 years later, and strongly influenced

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Man's Worldly Goods*, Huberman, p. 167.



the emotional release which was a feature of the latter half of the Napoleonic wars, and was responsible for the growing missionary activity of the churches and the foundation of missionary societies. The acquisition of Sierra Leone was the direct outcome of this philanthropic urge.

The growing accumulation of consumers' goods unable to find a market even among the growing millions at home was, as we have seen, dispersed among the dwellers on the coast of Africa, or forced upon reluctant Indian peasants by the destruction of their home industries. As the owners of these goods had found their own markets, had financed their own enterprises and were inherently distrustful of the interest which Government might take in their proceedings, they carried their *laissez-faire* principles with them from their factories in Lancashire to their trading-posts on the Niger. The prevailing sentiment against an increase in Government responsibility for overseas possessions was expressed by the resolution of a Committee of the House of Commons in 1865. While it recognized that it was not possible to withdraw the British Government wholly or immediately from its commitments on the West African Coast, it reported that all further extensions of country or new treaties offering any protection to native tribes would be inexpedient, and that the object should be the ultimate withdrawal from all settlements, except probably Sierra Leone, required as a coaling station.<sup>1</sup> This policy of withdrawal was officially held for the next 15 years, though the trend of events was all against it. With the emergence of Germany as a united European Power, and the economic necessity for further territorial acquisitions in the interests of capitalist producers, the pendulum swung violently in the opposite direction, marking a decisive imperialist trend, the adoption of an official policy of "grab", whose titular heads were Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes, and whose most spectacular action was the Partition of Africa.

But though the British Government did not take the initiative in the forward movement, it was certainly not disinterested in what was happening in Africa or in the Pacific. What the official mind had no share in planning, the unofficial hand had great opportunities for "directing"—and very profitable "directorships" they were. The interlocking network of society, politics and finance kept the Government in closest touch with activities of which they might have been supposed to disapprove, but for which they were in every sense of the word responsible. The device of the Chartered Company was an old one<sup>2</sup>; among the earlier

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Mary Kingsley*, Gwynn, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlantic Charter and Africa*, appendix, pp. 6 ff.

companies were: 1588, the first English Chartered Company in West Africa; 1621, Dutch West India Company; 1626, the Rouen Company of Senegal and Gambia; 1642, Richelieu's Company of Madagascar; 1681, Frederick William of Brandenburg's Company of the West Coast; 1683, French Royal Company of Senegal. The London Company of Barbados had worked in the West Indies; the East India Company's activities had brought it to the possession of a vast empire: the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa (1662), the New Royal African Company (1672) and the English African Company of Merchants (1750) had operated in the Gold Coast from the end of the 17th century till 1807. But it was the last quarter of the 19th century that saw the foundation of half a dozen most influential companies, among them the Chartered Company of Nyasaland, the African Lakes Corporation (1878), the Imperial British East African Chartered Company (1888) -- a counterblast to the German East Africa Company, founded in 1884 -- the Portuguese Mozambique Company (1888), the British North Borneo Company (1882). This last association is the only one of the Chartered Companies to retain administrative control of a territory in which it once traded. This commercial function it has now abandoned, and it derives its income from land leases and its rent from assets as well as from certain governing rights; in addition, it works mines in the neighbouring State of Sarawak. The two most important were the United Africa Company, which, founded in 1879, became the National African 3 years later, transforming itself into the Royal Niger in 1885, under which title it lasted till 1900, when it was bought out for £1,000,000; and the British South Africa Company, whose charter, granted for 25 years in 1889, was prolonged until 1924.

The latter two companies acted almost as independent States, with their own armed forces to carry out the policies which business men for purely business ends adopted as they thought fit.<sup>1</sup> Some of these were extremely shady; the records of their dealings with Nigerian chiefs, with the Matabele and Lobengula make sad reading; the *sacra aini fames* drove them on, until they became owners of territories far too big for their resources<sup>2</sup> and quite beyond the administrative machinery at their disposal. The control exercised by the Commissioners, nominally servants of the State, was vague and ineffective, their original purpose as trading companies was neglected, and they were glad enough to be taken over by the Government. Their assets were not inconsiderable; the British South Africa controlled 150,000 square miles -- an

<sup>1</sup> *Imperialism*, Hobson, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Their Uganda police force cost the East Africa Colony £40,000 a year.



area more than half as large again as Great Britain and Northern Ireland (94,000). By fostering, *e.g.*, in Southern Rhodesia, white settlement at the expense of native development, they had left an influential nucleus which determined that when Company rule ended, much the same policy should be continued, only with the additional prestige given by the elevation of the country to the status of colony with responsible government, under Letters Patent (1st September, 1923).<sup>1</sup>

But when the Chartered Companies both in West Africa and in the Rhodesias abdicated their functions, they left behind them a tangled mass of claims arising from the dubious means by which their first advances were made and from the haphazard way in which they had allocated land, in defiance, or ignorance, of any tenure by natives, or indeed of any method which any legal system could recognize. Through the impenetrable jungle the axes of the lawyers made long going, while the verdicts which even the Privy Council reached were more than a little bewildering. Thus, after an extremely lengthy legal process, it was decided that though the British Southern Africa Company no longer had land rights in Southern Rhodesia, it still possessed mineral rights; 10 years after the granting of responsible government £2,000,000 was the price that had to be paid to acquire these rights. In Northern Rhodesia to-day royalties have still to be paid to this company on minerals mined in the colony; this royalty, together with income tax paid to the British Treasury by companies registered in Britain, comes to just under 60% of the total levy on the only really valuable and productive industry which Northern Rhodesia possesses. When the Niger Company was bought out, and its main organizer, Lugard, became first Governor of the Niger colony, it still retained the right to half the mining royalties paid to the Government.

The reluctance of the State to take early responsibility for the areas which the Chartered Companies controlled was matched by their reluctance to give these same areas adequate financial assistance when they had been finally annexed. The colonies thus acquired were regarded as subsidiary companies to one great holding company, and were intended to contribute their quota of profit to the parent firm, even if not in the form of actual tribute. If they failed to do this, they were written off as a loss and little was done to rehabilitate them. Earl Grey succinctly described this attitude: "The surest test for the soundness of measures for the improvement of an uncivilized people is that they should be self-supporting".<sup>2</sup> There were two aspects to this

<sup>1</sup> *Native Policy in Southern Africa*, Evans, p. 116, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Pim, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

book-keeping business. From the commercial point of view, the directors of the big companies, whose money was invested in the colonies, naturally wished for good returns, and spared no pains in influencing colonial governments to give them every assistance, even, in some cases, pressing upon them the desirability of compulsory labour and getting administrative officers to act as recruiters for that purpose. From Whitehall's point of view it was most desirable that colonial budgets should be balanced and that no call should be made upon the Imperial Exchequer to make good their deficits. Taxation and a money economy were therefore imperative, for their imposition forced the native into labour for white masters and provided the means for carrying on Government services. But the poorer the colony—in natural resources—and the greater its difficulties of transport and climate, the less able was it to raise the necessary money, either to pay for social and other services or to attract the capital necessary for its development. So it was in essence the same story; the rich got richer, the poor poorer. Those who needed the greatest help were less able to get it. When things were going badly, then all schemes of development stopped, and the situation grew still worse.

It is interesting in this connection to see how one European country—Sweden—met a danger of an analogous type. At the beginning of 1933 the figures of unemployment were very high. A Socialist Government had assumed office, and, taking its courage in both hands, it put into practice the theories of several distinguished economists, some of them British. During the slump it borrowed freely, encouraged spending by public and private authorities, and was not afraid of that bogey of more orthodox financiers and Chancellors—the unbalanced budget. When, as part of the trade cycle (the alternating boom and depression which all Europe knows so well), some improvement followed, public borrowing was reduced, the level of taxation maintained and the deficit on previous budgets repaid. The Government also adopted a double budget, one part of which was called the “running” and the other the “capital” budget. The former contained taxation receipts and all yearly State incomes which balanced the ordinary expenditure, while the latter was met by borrowed money.<sup>1</sup>

It is not suggested here that the solution of Sweden's problem can be applied direct to the colonies—indeed, Sweden's emergence from the slump has by some been attributed to luck or the beginning of armament construction throughout Europe stimulating a demand for her most important products. Her Govern-

<sup>1</sup> *The Smaller Democracies*, Simon, pp. 80–87.

ment was also able to carry out these experiments by having public confidence on its side, thus preventing a flight of capital—a contingency which might only too readily become fact in other circumstances. But it is possible to argue that the curtailment of development schemes in times of depression is an avoidable evil, and that where a country requires large sums for developments, which are not likely to give an immediate return, as in the case of railways, to saddle the ordinary budget with their deficiencies, or even with their interest charges each year, is a sort of financial parochialism with cramping results.

The prevailing philosophy of colonial rule, discouraging as it was to any forward movement in the provision of all types of services, meant that for a long time the Colonial Office could command only limited funds even for such schemes as it approved. The Colonial Development Act, passed in 1929, put at its disposal £1,000,000 a year, to be expended either by grant or loan on projects designed to aid agriculture and industry in colonial territories, and so to promote commerce with, and industry in, the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> It was this latter proviso which prevented the Committee appointed under the Act from giving help of an ordinary administrative or a recurrent nature, normally to be met from ordinary colonial revenues, nor could they afford temporary assistance to a depressed industry with no prospect of conferring permanent benefit on a colony. Nor, again, did they feel justified in approving schemes which would entail maintenance and upkeep beyond the capacity of the normal revenue. While they looked for some participation from a colony in the financial obligations of any project, they did not make this an absolute necessity. The Committee functioned for 11 years (until July 1940), and during that time they approved 596 schemes, which were estimated in all to cost £19,284,536, of which £8,875,083 was met by grants (£5,671,656) or loans (£3,203,427). It is instructive to see how their assistance has been applied—*i.e.*, to what purposes and with what changes, over a period of years. In the following table, the first figure gives the percentage of the total allotted in the first 10 years, the second, how much in the last year, and the third the percentage over the whole period.

Agricultural development . . . . .	5%	18%	6%
Internal transport and communications . . . . .	33	5	30
Water supplies and water power . . . . .	11	8	10
Electricity . . . . .	1	11	2
Scientific research . . . . .	7	1	7
Public health . . . . .	13	40	16

<sup>1</sup> For details see Cd. 6298, July 1941.

The emphasis on transport, mainly railways, is interesting, but its decreasing proportion as against a rapid rise in the allocation for public health and agriculture is to be welcomed. Scientific research, on the other hand, suffered very severely.

The Committee were conscious of the inadequacy of the money for the vast areas affected—49 colonial dependencies shared in their loans and grants, so that the butter (*i.e.*, £9,000,000 in 11 years) was thinly spread. Proportionately to population, Newfoundland (which received over £750,000) had most in the way of loans, with £2 9s. 10d. per head, Trinidad, the Unfederated Malay States and Cyprus least, with but 1d. Of the grants, St. Helena at the head of the list got £9 15s. 5d., Basutoland, at the bottom, 1d.! The mercantilist conception of ultimate benefit to the United Kingdom, the inability of so many colonies to initiate schemes because their normal revenues would not allow their maintenance, the inadequacy of the local technical staffs to cope with the extra work entailed, and finally the piecemeal nature of the schemes, without any relation and comprehensive plan of mutually advantageous development—all these objections were justification for the supersession of the Act by a wider and more invigorating idea.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 increased the money available for schemes proposed either by Colonial Governments or the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies to £5,000,000 annually for 10 years, and added a sum of £500,000 for Colonial research.<sup>1</sup> From the passing of the Act to the beginning of January 1942, 180 proposals were received, more than half from the West Indies. Between 1st October, 1940, and 30th June, 1942, a total of £601,152 was issued, of which £343,756 came from the old Act for schemes not yet completed, and only £249,853 was spent in nearly 2 years from the £10,000,000 available. By February 1944 the total of commitments under approved schemes was £7,408,746, and actual issues £1,300,951. £4,056,591 of this had been approved for the West Indies (£638,000 issued) and £2,046,147 for Africa (£447,851 issued). The preponderance of suggestions from the Caribbean colonies illustrates the advantage of gaining a bird's-eye view of the whole situation, by having one official, supported by a competent and enlightened staff, some Trade Union organizers, able to take a wider survey than the individual island Governments. But it also lends point to the suggestion that has

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. V. Hill has pointed out that we spend only one-third as much as the U.S.A. on scientific research in industry and that the half-million available for Colonial research works out at 2d. per annum per inhabitant of the Colonies (House of Commons, March 1943).

not infrequently been put forward that some machinery should be devised for a continuous survey both of the needs of colonial peoples and of the actions of colonial Governments for which the House of Parliament still has the final responsibility. In the files of any large library stands an imposing array of reports issued by Royal Commissions, Enquiries, Investigations and so forth. They have nearly all been published after a particular scandal has been exposed, after a catastrophic slump in the economy of some colony, after an outbreak of disorder and rioting; in the last 80 years the British West Indies have been reported upon by the following Commissions and Investigations: 1865, Commission on Rebellion; 1877, Juvenile Destitution and Demoralization; 1882, Crossman (Finances); 1897, Norman (Sugar, etc.); 1921-22, the Wood Mission; 1930, Olivier (Sugar) Commission; 1931, Leeward Isles and St. Lucia; 1933, Education; 1937, Disturbances in Barbados, Trinidad, etc.; 1939, Labour Conditions; 1941, Bahamas Disturbances. In addition to this is the still unpublished report of the Royal Commission of 1938-40. A permanent commission, able to predict from its constant stream of fresh information the most probable developments of economics and politics, and to plan ahead over a long period of time, would offer a much better chance of avoiding the sort of trouble that previous commissions have had to investigate *ex-post facto*, but the Government is adamant against it.

Let us return for a moment to the question of colonial government. There is a danger that each colonial area, if its development is regarded simply as a matter of concern to itself, and without relation to other colonies either in its own neighbourhood or faced with analogous problems, will grow up with a complex of "national sovereignty", similar in kind, if not in degree, to that which has so disastrously influenced the smaller States of Europe, some of which stood in the same relation economically, for instance, to Germany, as if they were her own colonies. This danger is the more probable where a powerful white settlement has gained, or been endowed with, political control, as in Kenya. Here the concept of white sovereignty stands opposed to the policies adopted in the neighbouring colony and mandate of Uganda and Tanganyika, and is therefore all the more likely to cause future harm, unless it can be "diluted" by the amalgamation for many purposes of the three areas, which suggest themselves as a very reasonable unit. The price of such amalgamation is high, and it would take a long period of patient education to get it accepted—if it is preferred, let us use the word "collaboration", of which there is already some degree; the Customs Union

originally arranged between Kenya and Uganda was extended to Tanganyika, as also was the Postal Service, but with the exception of the annual Governors' Conference, that is as far as it has gone in peace-time, though in war there is a Joint Production Council. East Africa has been the subject of nearly as many Commissions as the West Indies, but they have come to grief on the rock of the settlers' objection to surrendering any of their present political power.

Another area in which collaboration has been attempted is covered by a number of treaties known as the Congo Basin Treaties, though including a rather wider area than the name implies. This covers Belgian Congo, parts of French Equatorial Africa, Cameroons and Portuguese Africa, Ruanda-Urundi, Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Nyasaland, Zanzibar, "Italian" East, northern tip of Northern Rhodesia, part of Angola and of Sudan—thus stretching from coast to coast and ignoring political boundaries. In its original form the convention was signed by no fewer than 13 European States, and provided, without time limit, for free navigation not only on the Congo, but also on the Niger, completely free trade within the area, industrial development, equal exploitation of resources, restriction of slave-trade and other matters.<sup>1</sup> Its revision after 1919 did not fundamentally alter its main provisions, though it removed the limitation imposed upon customs duties, while still retaining the principle of equality of treatment for the subjects of all the signatory States. Even the threat from Japan, who poured cheap manufactured goods into East Africa at an alarming rate, was not considered serious enough to justify the loss which would be suffered by the abrogation of these agreements. The measure of Japan's advance may be gauged by the increases of her imports into West Africa, where between 1932 and 1934 they rose from 2.5% to 18.5%, and into East Africa, where the 39% of 1929 had by 1935 become 88%.<sup>2</sup>

This "Open-Door" policy was not only carried out in the "Congo Basin" area, but was the general rule throughout the British Colonial Empire, at least prior to 1922, and even between that year and the Ottawa Conference of 1932 was comparatively little infringed. The differential tariffs which began to be introduced after 1919 appeared more considerable in number than they were potent in effect, for though the Report of the United States Tariff Commission of 1922 stated that 26 out of 55 British Colonies already graded their tariffs in order to give preference to imperial goods, yet these departures from the accepted policy of

<sup>1</sup> *African Survey*, pp. 1341-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1336.

the previous 60 years affected only 5% of British colonial trade.<sup>1</sup> So while the British Empire was cause for considerable political envy on the part of other States, there was no great reason for economic envy, as equality of opportunity for markets, either import or export, was there for all to take advantage. But a change was in the air—the same United States Commission regretted the reappearance of the old mercantilist principles which had reserved all the advantages of colonial trading to the metropolitan Power, and had been one of the main grievances giving birth to the American War of Independence. Years before it had been a fond hope that the removal of trade barriers would be a stepping-stone towards international peace. The wheel had indeed come full circle when the very imperial Power which for many decades had followed the “open-door” policy now copied the examples of such countries as France, who has always kept her colonies very much as her own economic hunting-ground. The “assimilated” colonies (Indo-China, Madagascar, Guadeloupe, Réunion, Martinique, French Guiana) have free trade with France, with what is almost a complete reciprocity of tariffs. Her other colonies strongly favour, in their fiscal arrangements, “la patrie”.

In the years before the war, then, there was growing interdependence between imperial Powers and their colonial dependencies—we must remember that we omit for this purpose the Dominions, India and Burma, whose control over their own financial policies enables them to follow their own self-interest, instead of being part and parcel of the United Kingdom. The total trade of the Mother-country with the colonies was a comparatively small but growing proportion, though the actual or relative increase was not as great in the case of Great Britain as in that of France, as we can see:<sup>2</sup>

	<i>Imports</i> %.				
	1929.	1930.	1932.	1934.	1938.
Great Britain . . . . .	6.1	—	—	7.5	8.5
France . . . . .	12.0	12.5	20.9	25.3	27.1
	<i>Exports</i> %.				
	1929.	1930.	1932.	1934.	1938.
Great Britain . . . . .	9.1	—	—	10.4	12.3
France . . . . .	18.8	20.6	32.4	29.9	27.1

On the other hand, the proportion of trade which the colonial dependencies conducted with their own Mother-countries was larger, yet showing the same variations.

<sup>1</sup> R.I.I.A.: *Information Department Papers* 18a, p. 64. *Argument of Empire*, Hancock, pp. 89 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Data from *ibid.*; *The International Share-Out*, Ward.

		<i>Imports.</i>	<i>Exports.</i>
		1933.	1933.
Great Britain:	Colonies . . . . .	24'4'' <sub>0</sub>	32'5'' <sub>0</sub>
	Mandates . . . . .	17'9	31'4
France:	Colonies . . . . .	66'7	75'0
	Mandates . . . . .	56'4	46'1
Japan:	Colonies . . . . .	83'1	88'5
	Mandates . . . . .	94'9	97'0

We have to remember that during the earlier years covered by the above figures, the total volume of world trade was steadily shrinking; in millions of gold dollars, the following figures show this:

		<i>Imports.</i>		<i>Exports.</i>	
		1929.	1933.	1929.	1933.
Great Britain	. . . . .	5,420	2,020	3,542	1,200
France	. . . . .	2,280	1,127	1,961	704
Japan	. . . . .	1,000	318	969	302
Totals	. . . . .	8,700	3,465	6,472	2,206

There was therefore a very pronounced return to mercantilist practices, strongly reinforced by the agreements made at Ottawa, ostensibly with the self-governing Dominions, but in reality compelling the whole Empire to follow suit. It was, in essence, a hunt for imperial "autarky", an economic self-sufficiency, a hunt which Germany so vigorously engaged in during the later 1930s; in it she would not have been nearly so successful as she was had there not been certain States in Europe mainly productive of agricultural commodities, whom she bound to herself by every form of inducement, legitimate and illegitimate, thus founding a colonial hegemony near at hand which was almost as real as that exercised by Britain over her trans-ocean dependencies. "No great nation", said the German leaders, "is either free, or independent or sovereign, so long as it is dependent upon the foreigner from the economic standpoint, that is, so long as it must have recourse to him to procure any of the goods which are indispensable to life." So schemes of protection and barter, as well as an intensive drive for the invention and profitable use of substitute raw materials, came into play, for Germany was nearly as dependent as Great Britain on imports; the latter country, according to returns, has a self-sufficiency from her own products only in potatoes and coal, while the former is completely independent only in potatoes, beet sugar, coal, magnesite and potash. She suffers from a partial deficiency in wheat, meat, fats, lead, zinc, manganese, antimony and timber. These, of course, can, to some



extent, be made good by accumulation of stocks and the re-use of scrap.

Some years ago Dr. Goebbels described the essential materials of modern industrialism (and therefore by implication of modern warfare) as "coal, iron, cotton, oil, rubber, copper". Of these, the only one which holds any pre-eminent place among colonial products is rubber, about 91% being produced by dependencies of European countries, most of all of Great Britain<sup>2</sup> and Holland. Of coal about 0.6% is derived from colonial sources, iron-ore 4.5%, cotton 3.2%, petroleum 3.9%, copper 18.8%. This list is obviously defective, since it omits important and comparatively rare metals, whose presence is essential for certain alloys of steel, or the manufacture of aluminium. Nor, again, does it include phosphates. Still less does it include "those goods indispensable to life" on which the population which serves the industrial or war machine must live, most of all foodstuffs—wheat, meat, butter, vegetable fats, tea and coffee. Here, too, the contribution of the genuine colonial dependencies is varied, but much more substantial than for metals and other raw materials. Of wheat they supply only 1.8%, meat 1.3%, butter 0.1%, but of the rest, the great bulk of palm-oil (98.2%), nearly half the tea (43.5%), over a quarter of the ground-nuts (28.5%), 11% of coffee.

From a consideration of these facts and figures we may see that colonial areas are not in themselves a vast repository of all the most precious things without the possession of which a great nation will inevitably starve. That part of the political *impasse* with which Europe found herself confronted was due to a deliberately chosen economic policy followed by Germany; probably the richest colonial area in the world, the Netherlands East Indies, followed an "Open Door" policy, both for the export of raw materials and for the import of capital to work them, and so made available for the world the supplies of palm-oil, rubber, copra, tin, tea, cane sugar, sisal, rice, bauxite and petroleum which were produced there; the growing interdependence of metropolitan and colonial countries was interpreted by those without colonial possessions as a threat to their national existence; problems of currency took on a greater urgency and seriousness; the "coefficient of prestige" loomed larger and larger in the calculations of European statesmen. All these factors played their part in the hectic, fever-flushed state in which the nations of Europe lived between 1931 and 1939. The era of expansion postulated by the classical economists for the success of capitalism had come to an end, and unless some way of lowering the political temperature could be found, a major epidemic was inevitable.

How could this be found? Desperate situations demand des-

perate remedies. The old imperial idea of dependent colonies existing only for the benefit of a mother-country has, we hope, been abandoned for ever. True, it rears its ugly head from time to time—after the last “Great War” there were certain proposals put forward in an unblushing way by an Empire Resource Development Committee, who were anxious to put “practical business men” in charge of colonial resources; these they would “develop”, and pay the profits into the British Treasury for the liquidation of the war debt. Having seen what business men could do in the Congo, or even in French Equatorial Africa, where at one time  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the territory was allocated to concessionaires, we may be glad that their proposals got short shift. But development is bound to come—and therefore it must be regulated. The old unrestricted struggle must be resolved not by an agreement between the former contestants merely to join together, and so make their united forces invincible, but by a clear and definite curtailment by international action of those practices which have skimmed the cream from colonial territories, left them poorer in resources than before, and debilitated and demoralized their inhabitants.

Development requires capital. In earlier days money was poured into Africa in substantial streams, but devoted primarily to mineral production and railway building. Much of it proved remunerative, much of it also was lost, but comparatively little of it was employed for the genuine benefit of Africa’s inhabitants. But the greatest defect was the lack of regulation and direction. In the operations of war, strategy is controlled by a General Staff, possessed of all the essential information, and acting under the direction of the political Head of the State. There is as yet no Economic General Staff, capable of co-ordinating scattered activities or of giving purpose and objective to the policies decided upon. Such an Economic General Staff would seem to be a necessity for post-war years, when planning on a large scale is inevitable if the best advantage is to be drawn from the new conditions which the war has created. Public opinion is becoming ripe for the acceptance of such ideas and impatient with the chaos which it has seen on every side. Such a General Staff for Great Britain implies a colonial section, whose investigations should probe deep into the nature of the colonial problem, and whose authority should prove superior to the sectional interests which have hitherto had more or less their own way. Nor would this necessarily mean that colonial economics were directed solely from London and minister solely to the advantage of Great Britain.

First of all the Colonial Empire could well be divided into a

number of areas, on a geographical basis, each of which would erect its own Planning Council. On such bodies would be representatives of the people most intimately concerned with the development of the area—that is, native residents armed with responsible powers and answerable to the organs of government in their own country. The day has long passed when it would be impossible to find men and women from the West Indies, from the West Coast of Africa, from Uganda who could hold their own with white men sent out from London. If this were not so, it would in itself be the gravest of indictments of our own colonial rule and the disproving of most of our professions. These Planning Councils need not be armed with authority overriding that of the separate Governments in any one area, but they would give an impetus to the re-grouping and amalgamation of the somewhat artificial and arbitrary divisions which now exist. Their first attention would be directed to a survey of the needs and deficiencies most seriously hampering local development, and, in consultation with each other and with the British Economic General Staff, co-ordinate, among other things, the flow of capital and the encouragement of such commodities as could benefit both the individual colonies and Great Britain. Their first task would therefore probably be the raising of money for capital development.

Where is this to come from? Capital raised from abroad naturally means that the greater part of the profits which accrue also goes abroad, often with comparatively little benefit to the country in which it was earned. When capital has been raised by colonial Governments it has been at high interest charges, often as much as 6%, especially in the years after 1920, when there was the urge for development and money was dear. The debt charges have consequently been a very heavy burden on colonial, especially African, budgets. To avoid both these difficulties we must so educate ourselves as to be prepared to find substantial sums for colonial development at no, or at most nominal, rates of interest. Under the normally accepted methods of business, such investments would offer not the slightest attraction to the entrepreneur, but the war has altered many of our preconceived notions of finance; it would be no very great innovation to set up a large credit institution, backed by Government authority and independent of the purely self-seeking calculations of "big business". In any case, it would only be a matter of simple justice, for none can deny that the standard of living in our country, deplorably low though it is in many respects, owes much to the cheap food with which cheap labour in the colonies has provided us.

Supposing our Planning Council has been set up; it has secured

an adequate supply of capital. What shall it spend it on? It should not repeat the history of the 19th century, which we outlined in the last paragraph—colonial development is not meant to supply us with a high standard, at somebody else's expense; it must not enable British industrialists to obtain their raw materials often at fantastically low rates of wages to native producers. Its first aim must be the encouragement of internal trade and internal markets. If we examine the African colonies, we see at once how small is this internal trade, taken by and large, how unevenly developed it is throughout the continent, and how, where it is most developed, the major part of the business, and therefore the major part of the profits, is in the hands not of the Africans themselves, but of Indian and Syrian immigrants. We have not yet fully realized the potentialities of our own home market. Partly, no doubt, that is the result of our vast dependence on overseas imports, with the consequent emphasis on the British working-class as a producing and not a consuming element. Similarly, the possibilities of the African or the West Indian as consumers have been quite overshadowed by their capabilities as producers, mainly for an external market. We must face the possibility that the growth of this internal trade may temporarily divert from us some of the raw materials that have hitherto come our way—if Africans could be encouraged to drink cocoa or coffee, we might have to do with less ourselves, especially if the preparation of these commodities took place in the countries where they were grown; or if soap manufacture took place in Nigeria from materials grown on the spot—but in the long run the increased wealth, and health, of the people themselves would stimulate an all-round increase in world-trade, even if it meant that we no longer retained even the present position we occupy in world manufacture. In any case, our position has vastly altered in the past 40 years; no longer is this country the primary manufacturing centre of the world exporting its goods, at its own prices. Between 1910 and 1914 the value per head of the population of our total overseas trade was £28; between 1930 and 1934, it was £26 5s. In 1907 of the total final value of British industrial production, 38·5% was derived from exports, in 1924 32·8%, in 1931 the slump actually brought this down to 19·7%. We are in the process of discovering our own home market. Let us help colonial peoples to discover theirs.

This discovery will lead to two desirable ends: the wider range of demands within these territories will tend to render them less dependent on one staple export crop on which all their fortunes hang. How disastrous this has been we have already seen. They will no longer be equally susceptible to the rise and fall of prices

on the European market, and so will be able to develop an economy on their own lines and suitable to their native "genius". Another, perhaps more remote but equally desirable, result would be the opportunity to acquire within the country itself some capital, in the hands of those whose interests would be in carrying still further this internal development. At first the sums involved would be small, but if properly employed would be "self-supporting"—that is, not called upon to bear any interest to parties outside the colony. The Planning Council, under the direction of the Government, would have to take every precaution to prevent the growth of an entrepreneur class exploiting its own fellows, and so, from the beginning, emphasis should be laid on the promotion of co-operative enterprises, the main purpose of which would be the control of prices joined to the maintenance of quality.

Capital has been attracted to Africa by one of two magnets—mineral wealth, which secured most of the private capital, and railway construction, with its fixed charges, and in many cases Government guarantee. The latter is the more temporary attraction, for newer methods of transport are among the factors which make railway investment less attractive, while the heavy industries which provided the bulk of the material are relatively less important than they were in the palmy days of half a century ago. But the exploitation of minerals has had a profound effect, and moulded the shape of development in many ways and in some aspects of life only remotely connected with it. It is not merely that minerals have traced the railway lines, and railway lines influenced the area of white settlement; not merely that they have produced an industrial proletariat as in Katanga, or introduced the Bantu to a range of novel desires—they have had the most disturbing effect on the whole relationship of men to the land; a relationship of profound importance, all the world over, but nowhere more so than in Africa. We sometimes forget that agriculture is in essentials as much an industry as mining or spinning, with its own technique and its own standards, capable of just as much development or deterioration as those other methods of employment which would normally fall under the heading of industry. But agriculture and mining are separated in most parts of Africa by a gulf greater than that between any two other ways of earning a living; for mining has reproduced in Africa all the phenomena of the Industrial Revolution, coloured by the use of a 20th-century technique, while for the most part agriculture is trying to live in pre-Industrial Revolution days. Centuries separate the outlook of the agriculturist and the miner, yet both rely on labour from the same source. The development of the one side has been far too rapid for the other, and the consequences of

this uneven advance disastrous for the people who have to live in both worlds.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to regard minerals as a wasting asset, even though for those parts of Africa where they are worked exhaustion point is nowhere in sight, while agriculture is expanding and self-renewing. But if agriculture is to take its proper place in an ordered economy, it must not be regarded, as has so often happened in the past, as a means of subsidizing industry, making up the low wages paid to workers elsewhere, nor a reservoir of man-power to be drawn upon at will. There is as much need to stabilize the agricultural as there is to stabilize the industrial and mine-working population, and to provide for each a reasonable and secure livelihood. Africa's man-power is not unlimited. The poverty of the native has often forced him to sell himself, and not the produce he can grow. This has perhaps created a false impression of the total amount available. We must remember that the resources of the continent are as yet largely untapped; their scientific and careful development will make greater calls upon the population, and its wasteful employment now and in the past may make it unable to satisfy the legitimate demands likely to be made. The approximate population of Africa is given as 145,000,000, but it is extremely patchy in its average density, very high in parts of Kenya on Reserves, in Egypt about 400 to the square kilometre, sparse on the steppe lands of the Southern Sahara, in the Congo between 1 and 1.5 for the same area, and less than half that in Northern Nigeria. Throughout the continent it is not more than 4 per square kilometre. Against this we may set the estimate of an optimum population of about 1,000,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

Some degree of industrialization is inevitable unless Africa is to be for ever condemned to supply cheaply raw materials and food; but there are three conditions at least which must govern its development. First, it must be slow, or if not slow, carefully regulated; for the rapid development of mining has shown the dangers inherent in the swift processes which have marked the last 60 years. Far better have the Belgian system, by which in the Katanga area a native proletariat is being trained to stability and efficiency, than the haphazard ill-regulated method which in South Africa has wrought such havoc. Second, profits from industrialization ought in very large measure to remain for the benefit of the colony in which they are earned, and we should no longer see mining royalties paid to chartered companies or individuals whose contribution is small or even non-existent; why should the Enugu coal mines of Nigeria be the solitary example in the British Empire of that sort of undertaking directly worked

<sup>1</sup> *Africa Today and Tomorrow*, Westermann, p. 395.

by the State? . . . South Africa retains (for revenue purposes) a considerable portion of the wealth drawn from her heart; why should not, in process of time, by far the greater amount be devoted to communal benefits? And with this goes the corollary that a colony should be able so to levy taxation and distribute its incidence that the whole community shall benefit, and that any one section shall not profit beyond its due share from the proceeds. Third, it ought soon to be impossible to say that every black worker is unskilled, every white worker skilled—that the colour line shall divide, on one side the white, rich and trained, on the other the black, poor and untrained.

One great conception that has sprung from the war is "Lease-Lend". The flow of munitions and food across the Atlantic and Pacific, to Russia and China has been organized under a great imaginative idea. The pity is that it needed a war to bring it about. The machinery for carrying out these great transportations is in being—we hear of sugar refineries in America being taken to pieces and shipped to Russia. Behind it all is a great productive machine, diverted from its peace activities to those of war—but all under State control. Is it impossible to carry on the same schemes adapted to changed conditions under the same guiding principles? Do colonial areas not need producers' goods which they could have under a Master Lease-Lend agreement? And is not capital only one specialized sort of commodity of which they stand in want? No doubt the opposition would be great, especially as it would mean the continuance of public control, even public management. Certainly no less organizing ability would be required, but planning has been justified once and for all by Russia.

"How strangely active are the arts of peace,  
Whose restless motions less than war's do cease!  
Peace is not freed from Labour, but from noise,  
And war more force, but not more pains, employs."

The roots of the problem are in the economic nature and structure of our society. The *laissez-faire* doctrines of the 19th century brought about a false divorce between politics and economics—even Aristotle began his treatise on Politics with a critique of Housekeeping! The concentration of interest on how peoples ought to be governed, and not on how they lived, was in many cases almost fatal to their welfare, and allowed the practice of abuses and scandals which proved ruinous to their health and wealth. Even anthropology was interested in the wrong things—in the primitive and, from our point of view, undeveloped; the "museum piece", however near extinction, was hailed with greater

delight than the tribe or people evolving into different forms under the stress of external influences, while the theory of "child-races" tended to turn all native peoples— at least for Government purposes—into eternal Peter Pans. This latter misconception is by no means entirely discarded; we forget that, under the pressure of our own example and our own *force majeure*, peoples throughout Africa and in the Pacific have speeded up the rate of their development almost incredibly within two generations, and have passed from what was a relatively stable synthesis of life to the heady and confused "organized disorder" of our present day. And having brought them within the orbit of our own system, we cannot simply say to them, "Thus far and no farther". To do that would be to risk the fate of the man who sat on the safety-valve.

It is now a common-place of our thinking to emphasize the organic unity of the world. The triumphs of science, more particularly in its applied forms, have created a material revolution: our economic earthquakes can no longer be localized, and whether the epicentre be in the West Indies or the East, we feel their shocks almost as violently as though we were on the scene. The disastrous effects of two great wars can never fully be calculated—they have revealed, or even caused, the dependence of the white man upon the coloured, the defeat of the white man by the yellow; the ruin of native industries by the dislocation of war—all these things are deeply pondered. We accept the economic implications of our shrinking world. Do we always realize that the example of Russia, the strivings of China, the birth-pangs of a new India are as much common property, and are as familiar to the most out-of-the-way parts of the world as are bicycles and cheap Japanese stockings? The wireless and the cinema have opened up a new world to the East as well as to the West. If we complain that our own children get a false conception of the values and standards of life from a cinema industry which only provides either amusement or an escape from pressing reality, can we also complain if we think ourselves traduced in the minds of the Bantu or Malayan when he sees the same programmes?

The increasing use of wireless and the cinema in the work of education, as apart from their purely recreative functions, both in our own country and in the colonies, marks a further stage in the development of technique for the spread of information, but neither old-time methods nor the newer ones will be of much assistance unless the burden of poverty is first lifted from the shoulders of parents—that is, if we think only in terms of education of the young and adolescents. If we wish to promote adult education, the need is all the more pressing. We see in Europe how it is the countries with the highest standard of



and the best organized co-operative social system that are most anxious to promote still further the education and culture of their adult population. The Folk High School of Denmark is not found in Bulgaria. Inequality of opportunity, discrepancy of financial provision, inadequacy of accommodation, absence of openings for higher study—all these are characteristic of the colonial educational systems. Such a one can never provide the wise and far-sighted leadership which the times demand; those who have always to fight against their cramping restraints, even if successful, do not always outgrow the limiting conditions against which they struggled, and so become themselves cramped, thwarted, distorted and bitter—it could not be otherwise. Leadership is needed, not only for the great offices, or for those situations where the destinies of nations are decided, but for the everyday activity of communal life. How often the work of native co-operative societies has been rendered abortive through lack of men whose education has given them vision and patience—or financial probity. Co-operative societies are one of the great hopes of Africa and the West Indies: not only in the gathering and marketing of produce, but in the provision of credit and capital. They are sprung from the real needs and desires of a people, and for the latter function keep alive that personal interest and touch that can so easily be lost in the activities of a State Agricultural Bank; and the experience of Scandinavia has shown us that the work of co-operative societies is both the effect and the cause of sane, interested and democratic education.

But colonial peoples must find their leaders, also, in the political sphere: it is not sufficient that they become the most prominent figures only in co-operative societies, or in Trade Unions, where the constant fight against oppressive legislation or the oppressive agents of great combines sometimes shuts out the wider vision, and dulls the sharpness of constructive imagination. There must be leaders of such a stature that they can stand up intellectually and morally to the bureaucracy which runs colonial government and is so often both judge and jury in its own causes. Even more difficult, they have to tackle the large-scale interests which are behind bureaucracy and dictate, from afar, the policy which must be carried out. The giant United Fruit Company cannot be met by pygmies. Even a people reduced to slavery has within itself the embryo of leadership—a Moses strong enough to quell those who hanker for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and inspire them with his own vision.

Sir Arthur Salter<sup>1</sup> mentions as one great danger to peace the system by which private economic interests without responsibility

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Policies and Peace*, p. 34.

can use the powers of their States to push their advantage in competition with others. That same threat overhangs most colonial Governments. In time of peace it may force a policy detrimental to human beings, profitable to shareholders - schemes of restriction, "rationalization"; in time of war it may even prevent effective military action, such as a "scorched-earth" policy, through its concentration on post-war profitability. These economic interests none can now bring to the bar of public judgment: only rarely is the public conscience stirred to action - and even the motives are not always above suspicion. How much of the agitation against the Congo of Leopold's day was due to jealousy over the possession of a rich area by another nation? And if a greater degree of common ownership is one of the results of a re-orientation of our economic structure at home, then the benefits of that reform - or even revolution - must be carried to colonies.

Economic freedom is therefore essential - freedom and health, for, as Harold Butler says, "By the state of the world's economic health, its tranquility is largely determined".<sup>1</sup> Already the African has shown that in those more fortunate parts where he has taken a few steps along the road of economic freedom, he has proved himself capable of political initiative; the greater this freedom, the finer his achievements, seconded by an education adapted to his environment and his needs. That, of course, does not mean an inferior education, nor even the one that we think best for him. At the present time we are gravely dissatisfied with the education we provide for our own children; all the more ought we to criticize and ruthlessly amend the system we have transported to our colonies, for it reproduces most of the less attractive and less imaginative features of our home-produced article. We have applied in a mechanical way the already out-moded technique of our own pedagogy. Here and there we have made education compulsory, but not enforced that compulsion with good reason, for if every child came, there would be no room for them. We have starved teacher-training, and when the few have been trained, almost literally starved the products. We have provided few incentives to higher study: now that Hong Kong has gone, is there any other University in the Colonial Empire except Ceylon? Education means change. Have we grasped that truth, and are we prepared to accept its startling implications?

From the scientific knowledge which we at present possess it would not appear that "colour" is to be correlated with special endowments, or that there are valid grounds for arranging an order of merit, for each race, based on the colour of its skin, either in the intellectual, aesthetic or spiritual fields. Environment,

<sup>1</sup> *The Lost Peace*, p. 192.

previous history, present opportunity, all play modifying rôles; climate can handicap one function, perhaps assist another; some people have found proximity to the sea an inspiring factor, others have been subtly moulded by mountainous surroundings; the juxtaposition of certain natural resources has given others a valuable start. The instinctive pugnacity and tenacity of man have urged him to gain, and what he has gained to hold. The key-note played by every instrument is competition. The skilled white worker resents the intrusion of unskilled white—a higher degree of technical efficiency is protected against invasion from the less highly qualified; the craft unions in England in peacetime are adamant against those of their own countrymen who cannot “make the grade”. This competitive and self-protecting streak runs throughout our whole social structure, and the antagonisms which are so vigorous in the colonies are not fundamentally based on “colour aversion”. They would still be there if the inhabitants of Africa were white. It is in the economic and social structure that we must seek the primary cause—the question of colour usually comes in as a rationalization, and is used as an additional protection by one occupational or functional grouping against another.

So, too, with Race. That theory of unmixed races must be abandoned, for the world has progressed because of the diversity of the races and their sub-divisions. No doubt some qualities are more highly developed in one race than in another, but these qualities themselves are often the result of mixture, and the “area of overlap” is tremendous. No race has a monopoly of one virtue—or of one vice. Competition has hitherto prevented races from working out a synthesis of their natural endowments, gifts and predispositions—it is an internecine warfare on a world-wide scale; the harmony and integration which we find in a work of art are sadly lacking from what might be the grandest of all creative efforts—the ordered, balanced Human Society, into whose brilliant radiance of white light would be blended the rainbow hues of its many parts.



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